THE  TIMES

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FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN AND ALISDAIR MURRAY

EUROPE was plunged into confusion last night when Oskar Lafontaine resigned as German Finance Minister after a fierce cabinet row with the Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder.

Herr Lafontaine, decried by *The Sun* as "the most dangerous man in Europe", had made himself into Britain's bugbear by pushing hard for tax harmonisation and much tighter European integration, and his departure was greeted with barely concealed glee in Downing Street and on the international markets.

Investors concluded that the resignation would put an end to the damaging feuding between the German Government and the European Central Bank, and the euro — which had been trading at fresh lows — staged a remarkable turnaround within minutes. European Government bonds also climbed in the post-resignation euphoria and European stock markets, which were closed when the news broke, are expected to see strong gains today.

Herr Lafontaine, a champion of traditional tax-and-spend socialist policies, has been at war with the ECB from the moment he took office, with his demands for lower interest rates and a "Red euro" — a currency sensitive to centre-left pressure.

Analysts said that his departure not only restored confidence in the euro but, ironically, also made a European interest rate cut more likely because the ECB would feel less under pressure to prove its independence.

Herr Schröder hurried last night to reassure Germany that his coalition Government was still on a stable footing. But the Social Democrats will hold a crisis meeting today to nominate a successor to Herr Lafontaine as party chairman — with suggestions that Herr Schröder may take on the role — while the inner government circle will also announce a new finance minister.

Hans Eichel, the former prime minister of Hesse, is the front-runner. Herr Eichel, like Herr Lafontaine, is a strong believer in tighter European integration, but he is regarded as more of a conciliator.

Despite the Chancellor's apparent confidence, there was no disguising the fact that Herr Lafontaine's resignation was a crushing vote of no-confidence in the Government at a time when the country holds the EU presidency. Herr Lafontaine was central to the negotiations for an overhaul of European finances in preparation for the enlargement of the community and critical decisions are to be taken at a summit in Berlin in a fortnight.

Now Germany's ability to broker a satisfactory deal has been seriously weakened. Although the resignation removes a thorn from Chancellor Schröder's side, it cripples the government at a vital moment in European politics.

The struggle between Herr Schröder and his finance minister has been at the heart of the Social Democratic-led government since it toppled Helmut Kohl last September. Herr Lafontaine has come under sharp criticism for a muddled tax reform, for sending the wrong signals to industry and for political flirtation with ex-communists. The Social Democratic party has split into two camps, with modernisers loyal to the Chancellor having the slight advantage over more traditional socialists who looked to Herr Lafontaine.

The weakness of his position became clear earlier this week when he was again tipped to become the next president of the European Commission - an unrealistic but politically inspired leak intended to show that he was on the way out.

The showdown came at a cabinet meeting on Wednesday. The Chancellor complained about the sloppy work of some ministers and barked that he was fed up with backtracking after bungled and half-baked initiatives had been launched on the public. He then hinted he might resign if his team did not perform more professionally.

The comments were directed primarily at the controversial Green environment minister, Jürgen Trittin. But it was also a criticism of the finance minister. Herr Lafontaine gave his full support to the Chancellor at the cabinet session. Later that evening, however, he decided to throw in the towel.

Bonn in chaos, page 15
Leading article, page 23



Oskar Lafontaine, whose resignation yesterday was greeted with glee across Europe

Al Fayed's brother wins battle for passport

BY RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

THE brother of Mohamed Al Fayed yesterday won his six-year battle to get a UK passport, opening the way for the Harrods chairman himself to get his British citizenship.

A final decision on Mr Al Fayed's request for a passport has not been reached but Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, has removed an obstacle blocking a successful application.

The Home Office said it was seeking further information before making the decision on Mr Al Fayed's five-year effort to obtain citizenship.

But in giving his brother, Ali Fayed, his passport, Mr Straw ruled that a government report branding the brothers as liars was no longer relevant to the applications.

A statement issued by the Home Office said Mr Straw had decided not to be influenced by the Department of Trade and Industry report into the takeover of Harrods by the three Fayed brothers. It jad ruled that their account of the takeover in 1985 was "unreliable" "untrue" and "bogus".

Ali, Mohamed and Salah Fayed were said to have lied to the City, press, DTI and their advisers about their origins, wealth and business interests.

A Home Office statement said that Mr Straw had decided to discount the criticisms of Ali Fayed made in the DTI report because of the passage of time since it was published in 1990.

Home Office sources said that the criticisms would also be discounted when a decision is taken on Mr Al Fayed's application.

Laurence Harris, solicitor for the brothers, said they were delighted by the news and that Mr Al Fayed was confident that he will also now receive a British passport.

Mr Harris, a partner in the London law firm of D.J. Freeman, said that Mr Straw's decision was a huge step forward. "Ali has been waiting six years for his application to be determined fairly and he now has his passport."

Mr Harris refused to say what further information in relation to Mr Al Fayed's application was being sought by the Home Office and said he had no idea when the matter would be resolved.

Egyptian-born Ali Fayed, 55, who came to Britain in the late 1960s, originally applied for UK citizenship in 1993. His brother, Mohamed, 66, applied a year later. The third brother, Salah, has not applied for citizenship.

Lord Archer of Weston-Super-Mare, the former deputy chairman of the Conservative party, Sir Gordon Reece, Margaret Thatcher's image adviser, and Sir Peter Hordern, a former Tory MP, gave references for both men. Field Marshal Lord Bramall, former Chief of the Defence Staff, also supported Mr Al Fayed's application.

The applications were rejected in 1995 and the brothers then embarked on a legal battle to force a review. They won a Court of Appeal ruling in 1996 that the decision was unlawful.

Michael Gove, page 5

Clegg is cleared

Paratrooper Lee Clegg wept as he was acquitted of the 1990 murder of a teenage joyrider in Belfast, despite being branded a liar by the judge. Clegg was found guilty of a second charge of attempting to wound the car's driver. Mr Justice Kerr said that much of the soldier's defence was untruthful and incapable of belief..........Page 6

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Britain says EU farm deal is too costly

BY CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS AND PHILIP WEBSTER

THE European Union settled the outline of a radical reform to its costly system of farm subsidies yesterday, but Britain and France immediately insisted that the deal cost too much and needed more work.

Farm ministers claimed that they had achieved a breakthrough after three weeks of protracted negotiations in Brussels by devising a price and subsidy shake-up to curb the excesses of the £30 billion annual cost of the common agriculture policy (CAP).

While farmers across the Continent reacted with fury to planned cuts in their subsidised income, Franz Fischler, the EU Farm Commissioner said the spending overhaul, which trims guaranteed prices for beef, cereal and milk, was "the most far-reaching and comprehensive reform ever".

Nick Brown, the Agriculture Minister, who helped to tie up the deal at an all-night session, also called it "the most radical reform in the CAP since its inception". He said: "When fully implemented it will cut food bills by £1 billion a year, equivalent to £70 a year for a family of four."

Among other things, the reform calls for the first cut in subsidies to dairy farmers and a pledge to end the milk quota system, long opposed by Britain, in 2006. Britain's annual quota is also set to rise a little.

The benefit to consumers was challenged by the National Farmers Union, which gave a lukewarm welcome to the reform package. Ben Gill, the NFU leader, said: "I would like to think they would be passed to the consumer but the reality is that the proportion of the final retail price that the farm gate price makes is very, very small these days."

However, the package was

Continued on page 2, col 6



Here an EU directive, there an EU directive, everywhere an EU directive. Old Macdonald had a farm, eieio...

Cash freeze hope, page 13
Leading article, page 23

Premier League crisis as two quit

BY ADRIAN LEE

FOOTBALL was thrown into crisis last night after the Premier League's two most powerful officials were forced to resign over secret deals they allegedly made without consulting club chairmen.

Sir John Quinton, the chairman, and Peter Leaver, the chief executive, left after a stormy meeting at which they were told that England's leading clubs had lost confidence in them. Despite insisting they had done nothing wrong, the pair accepted that their positions had become untenable.

Their departures throw the national sport into further turmoil after the sacking of Glenn Hoddle and the recent resignation of Graham Kelly, the Football Association's chief executive.

The latest row involved the appointment of Sam Chisholm and David Chance, two former BSkyB executives, as consultants on television deals. It is believed they were offered annual contracts of £600,000 each, plus bonuses.

A Premier League source who attended yesterday afternoon's quarterly management meeting in London said: "This had been rumbling on for a while and matters came to a head. Feelings among the chairmen were strong."

It is likely that Sir John and Mr Leaver will receive sizeable pay-offs. The futures of Mr Chisholm and Mr Chance were also in doubt.

Dave Richards, the chairman of Sheffield Wednesday, was appointed acting chairman and Mike Foster, Premier League secretary, as temporary chief executive. A working party was set up to see if the contracts with BSkyB, an associate company of News International which owns *The Times*, and the BBC could be renegotiated.

Wembley sold, page 8
Matt Dickinson, page 52

Sheep grazed before the dinosaurs came

FROM SAM KILEY IN JOHANNESBURG

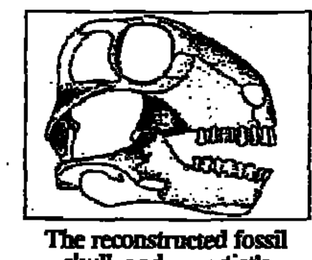
FOSSIL hunters yesterday revealed the skull of what they said could be mammals' earliest ancestor: a creature which lived 250 million years ago beside an inland sea in what is now South Africa.

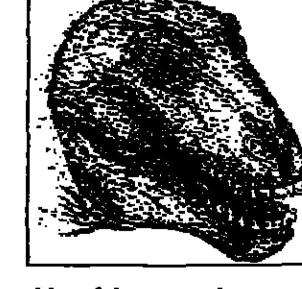
Anomocephalus africanus was probably about the size of a sheep, although almost certainly considerably less intelligent. It is believed to be the first of the Amonodonts, which predated the dinosaurs by millions of years. So called because of their teeth, these were the most common of the mammal-like reptiles known as therapsids, which evolved during the Permian period and vanished in the Jurassic era 180 million years later.

These were thought to have originated in Russia, but the discovery of *Amonocephalus africanus* means that scientists are having to rethink South Africa's role in evolution. Professor Bruce Rubidge, director of the Bernard Price Institute for Palaeontological Research at the University of the Witwatersrand, said: "Our new find has allowed us to re-evaluate the family relationships of the Anomodonts, and to show that the South African portion of what was the prehistoric super-continent of Gondwana was an evolutionary hotspot 250 million years ago."

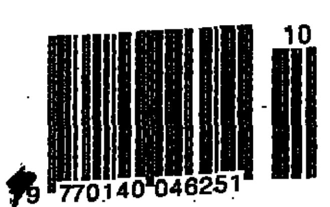
The scientists have yet to determine whether *Amonocephalus africanus* had warm or cold blood, but Professor Rubidge said: "We have taken a guess at what colour it was, and its skin texture. This is a very significant find because its shows that Africa could have been the home of the distant ancestors of mammals."

☐ Details of the discovery are available on the website http://www.wits.ac.za/media/press_releases/anom.html





The reconstructed fossil skull, and an artist's impression of the creature



Monkeys are left bemused in the organ grinder's absence



Apologies for absence can invite more questions than they answer. MPs who scampered into the Chamber after morning coffee for Questions to the Minister of Agriculture thought to find the main man. Nick Brown, waiting there for them, hot off the plane from Europe, where, until the small hours, he had been hammering out an EU agricultural settlement. The morning news was full of the deal.

So where was Mr Brown?

The Front Bench was almost empty. Alone on a waste of empty green leather were a small junior minister, Jeff Rooker, and his plumper junior ministerial pal, Elliot Morley. Big monkey, little monkey, no organ grinder. MPs were told Mr Brown was not yet back.

Why? Talks on the common agricultural policy had been completed in the small hours, leaving plenty of time for a little zizz, then a plane back. Suspicions intensified when Brown's juniors declined opportunities during questions to discuss the deal, insisting that they hoped their boss would be in today with a Commons statement.

One or two Labour backbenchers jumped the gun and praised Brown's magnificent achievement. Morley and Rooker did not seem too anxious to respond.

Maybe the Cabinet had not yet decided what line to take. Was this deal a revolution in agricultural policy, another remarkable triumph for Tony Blair's positive approach to Europe? Was it the best available in difficult circumstances, deserving measured, resigned approval? Or was it a shabby compromise that Mr Blair will toss back as inadequate? "It does not much matter what we say," Lord Melbourne once shouted at the backs of his departing Cabinet. "But, mind, we must all say the same thing." The subject was the price of corn.

What was the message now? Labour backbenchers felt their pockets for that reassuring buzz, but their pagers lay inert. No message to be on, no message to be off.

So Denis MacShane (Lab, Rotherham) decided to discuss something he did know about. "When I put the bacon in my frying pan, Madam Speaker," he complained, "a horrible white milky fluid appears, with bits of pink in it — just like the Tory benches opposite." The minister (Mr Morley) remarked, rather priggishly, that he was not responsible for what went on in his hon friend's frying pan.

At least MacShane called it bacon. Ministers kept calling it pig meat. David Rendel (Lib Dem, Newbury) referred insistently to pork in his question about British pig farming but there's something refreshingly old-fashioned about Mr Rendel. "Watch out, Charlie!" shouted a Labour wag as Rendel rose: both Charles Kennedy and David Rendel are in the running for the leadership of their party. "No competition there, Charlie!" Labour shouted, as a low-key Rendel concluded a courteous and factual question.

Mr Kennedy smiled.

Curiously, it seemed to be he who was acting as chief Liberal Democrat spokesman on agriculture, though that post is held by the notably expert Paul Tyler. Kennedy was making all the running. Tyler was away.

Why? I made inquiries. The official line is that Mr Tyler is off discussing bananas. My guess is that, in a dark alley, the small, wispy MP for North Cornwall has encountered two Kennedy henchmen with a big sack.

But it's not all sharp elbows and knives in backs at Westminster. Slow to rise with his question, quiet-spoken David Chaytor (Lab, Bury N) stammered "Forgive me" to Madam Speaker.

"Why?" shouted a Tory.

"'Cos he's a nice boy," came the returning cry from a Labour bench.

"And I'm a very forgiving Speaker," cooed Miss Boothroyd.

Hackney council chief quits after schools clash

Education in the borough may be privatised, write John O'Leary and Hannah Betts

THE first privatisation of an education authority moved a step closer yesterday with the resignation of the chief executive of Hackney council, in East London, days before the publication of a highly critical inspection report.

Tony Elliston announced his departure after four years in the £100,000-a-year post amid plaudits from local politicians. But he is expected to be criticised for his relations with the borough's education department when Ofsted reports on the authority.

David Blunkett, the Education Secretary, sent a "hit squad" into Hackney in September 1997 after a first Ofsted report found serious weaknesses in its school system. Richard Painter, the businessman appointed to bring about improvements, clashed with Mr Elliston over the restructuring of the authority, which had no chief education officer.

Liz Reid, an experienced official from Edinburgh was brought in to fill the post, but is said to have found her powers limited. The inspectors' report is expected to find that there has been little improvement since the authority's first clash with the Government.

Mr Blunkett announced in January that local authority services would be privatised if they were deemed unsatisfactory. Scores of firms applied for inclusion on a list of approved contractors.

Mr Elliston's resignation will be seen as part of a rearguard action to head off the possibility of privatisation. But ministers are understood to have already discussed a handover of key services. CfBT, a charitable trust which already acts as a consultant to a primary school in the borough which failed an Ofsted inspection, is the favourite to take them over.

Hackney councillors met with representatives of the Local Government Association on Wednesday evening to discuss strategies to keep control of the authority. One proposal involved the creation of an education action zone with the City of London Corporation.

An alternative involved the establishment of a Hackney Board for Education Standards, comprising some current councillors, representatives from neighbouring boroughs, members of the private sector and officials from the Department for Education and Employment. The LGA is known to favour the second option.

The association has asked Mr Blunkett to meet them for talks before any decision is made regarding Hackney's future. But ministers are known to be anxious not to allow uncertainty over the authority's future to drag on.

Yesterday Estelle Morris, the School Standards Minister, promised "decisive action" to secure better services in areas where local education authorities were failing, following an Audit Commission report on education services. Hackney was one of five authorities named by the Commission for their declining performance at GCSE at a time when most areas showed improved results.

Mr Elliston said he believed the foundations for continued improvements in Hackney's services were in place. "I have worked extremely hard over four years and there comes a time when you have to get a balance back into your life, especially when you have a wife and young family to consider."

Education, pages 42, 43



STEWART CONWAY

Mark Burnell, who impressed his publisher with his ability to write like a woman

Third time lucky for drop-out

A UNIVERSITY drop-out who spent seven years trying to find a publisher for his novels has finally won a £200,000 deal (Dalya Alberge writes).

Mark Burnell's third novel, *The Rhythm Section*, was snapped up just a week after he sent off the manuscript.

Susan Watt, publishing director of HarperCollins, which is publishing the thriller in a two-book deal, spoke of his "original author's voice". She was struck by how he convinces the reader with his characterisation that "it is a woman talking".

Commenting on his resilience during those seven years, Burnell, 34, said yesterday: "I took the view that the longer I spent at it, the harder it was to give up."

After dropping out of Durham University just a year into his course, he took a series of odd jobs including cleaning and barwork to support himself while he tried to write. Combining the two proved difficult and when he came into a little money from his family, he was able to devote himself to writing full-time.

"I moved out of London, back to Northumberland to make the money go further," he said. But though the money dried up last year, he refused to give up.

The Rhythm Section is the story of a woman living several different lives at once, he said. "It is about the deliniation between those lives and the complications when one or other of the lives starts to infect the other. It is about living under an alias."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Council tax in shires rises by up to

Council tax bills in the shires are set three times the rate of inflation this Chartered Institute for Public Finance found. It said that average increases wo London, 5.2 per cent in metropolitan ar lish counties and 8.4 per cent in Wales. a survey by *The Times* last month, which rural areas would be the hardest hit.

The three highest known rises are: S shire, with Band D up 17.9 per cent to £703 per cent to £751; and Wandsworth, South per cent to £373.38. Ministers have said they excessive rises but Richard Ottaway, Shadow Local Government, said the figures showed "ste He added: "Council taxes on ordinary families are more than £100 a week a year higher than when Labour came to power. Rural areas will be hardest hit. Labour took money from these areas and gave it to Labour heartlands."

market competition is a noble require further reform realised............Page 23

e Dripper be visitors to the Jackson trospective who see nothing macaroni. Others will the energy, confounded ense of void.....Page 23

DELL the meaning of ay has been s Budget defini- n if st-

Sarwar admits lie

Mohammed Sarwar, the Labour MP for Glasgow Govan, agreed at the High Court in Edinburgh that he had lied over a £5,000 cheque from his co-accused, Mumtaz Hussain. He originally told his lawyer he was given the cheque during a meeting at Glasgow Airport as a guarantee on a loan to an election rival, Badar Islam. Mr Sarwar said that was a lie to protect his hard-earned reputation — the cheque was handed over in a sweetshop. He denies giving Mr Islam £5,000 to make a false polling declaration. The case continues.

Computers for poor

Poor families will be given recycled computers for as little as £5 a month as part of the Government's drive to prepare the workforce for the computer revolution. David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, unveiled a £400 million information technology package detailing the Chancellor's Budget commitments. Teachers will be offered subsidised loans from a £20 million fund to buy laptops for use at home as well as at school, and employees will be given tax relief on computers borrowed from their firms.

Plan for exotic wildlife

A new deal for the giant earwig, blue-faced booby and other exotic wildlife of Britain's dependent territories has been drawn up by the Government. Ministers have agreed that after years of underfunding, the forests, mountains and waters of territories from St Helena to Pitcairn Island deserve better protection and an Environment Charter, leading to tougher laws to protect against the growing pressures of tourism, pirate fishing and development, will be unveiled by Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary.

Phone firms targeted

The Trade Secretary was urged yesterday to tackle extortionate rates charged by mobile phone companies as part of the Government's new campaign against "rip-off Britain". Consumer groups said that firms like Cellnet, Vodafone, One2 One and Orange should be among the first targets of new powers to crack down on retailers who charge more than their counterparts overseas after it emerged that the largest networks had hiked some off-peak charges by as much as 1,500 per cent.

Adopted girl can stay

A Jamaican girl adopted by her grandparents can remain in Britain, despite Home Office opposition. Five Law Lords unanimously ruled that the needs of the 17-year-old were more important than wider immigration policy considerations. Allowing the grandparents' challenge to a Court of Appeal ruling, Lord Hoffman said: "In cases in which adoption would confer real benefits upon the child it is very unlikely that considerations of 'maintaining an effective and consistent immigration policy' could justify refusal of an order."

School drugs alert

A girl aged ten was semi-conscious in hospital last night and two of her classmates needed medical treatment after swallowing drugs that she had brought to school. The pills, thought to contain a sedative, were brought into the playground at Colliery Primary School, in Dipton, Co Durham, by the girl, who innocently handed out them out "like Smarties" to two nine-year-olds. Police said that they had arrested a 19-year-old man. They are treating the girls as innocent victims.

Dog's Commons motion

Lucy, David Blunkett's guide-dog, made parliamentary history yesterday when it was sick on the floor of the House. The rare example of canine indiscipline came shortly after the Education and Employment Secretary finished a speech on the education provisions in the Budget. His Tory counterpart, David Willetts, rose to reply when the six-year-old black labrador-retriever cross made its feelings known. The dog was taken outside for some water. Mr Blunkett said later: "Lucy is fine now."



Prescott rules on war of the houses

By Tim Jones

MORE than 500 years after a crucial and bloody Wars of the Roses battle, John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, last night turned down permission for houses to be built on the site.

According to campaigners, including Robert Hardy, the actor, and Sir Jocelyn Stevens, chairman of English Heritage, the first battle of Tewkesbury, in 1471, was among the most important in English history.

But the local council had rejected their claims that the 10-acre field in Gloucestershire was steeped in history.

The second war to be waged on the site, against the proposal by Bryant Homes Mercia to built 51 houses, began in May, 1997, when Tewkesbury councillors supported the development plan.

The bitterly contested public inquiry ended when Mr Prescott agreed with the inspector that the proposed development would have an irreversibly damaging impact.

Kelvin van Hasselt, of the Battlefields Trust, said: "This decision is a crucial planning precedent and indicates the importance the Government attached to the Battlefields Register." Chris Shaw, planning officer for the borough council said: "It is a shame that the democratic process has been overturned because of the pressure of an unelected body."

EU subsidy

Continued from page 1

cast into doubt by France and Britain because the six-year reform will cost over £3 billion more a year than the £30-billion ceiling set by EU leaders last month.

"This does represent progress, but it is not satisfactory as far as we are concerned," said Tony Blair's spokesman.

Jean Glavany, the French farm minister, said: "The work remains unfinished. There is a risk that the accord will founder."

The French and British doubts could cause the whole package to unravel when European leaders try to overhaul the EU budget at a summit in Berlin on March 24. Freezing farm spending at close to current levels was a prime objective for London, Paris and Bonn.

The Germans, who were determined to broker a deal to clear the ground for Berlin, said they had achieved the best possible compromise. The negotiation was complicated by a French refusal to have anything to do with a German-backed scheme which would have required governments to shoulder part of the farm bill from their national budgets.

While Mr Brown's negotiating skills were praised when the Cabinet discussed the deal yesterday morning, Mr Blair and Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, made plain that further reform would be needed. Britain believes that the EU's stated aim of stabilising its overall spending at today's real terms level in the year 2006 is unattainable.

British sources accept that the French stance probably makes such a goal unrealistic.

London may get electronic election

By Jill Sherman
Chief Political Correspondent

LONDON'S five million electors could be the first in the country to use an electronic voting system when they choose their Mayor and Assembly members on May 4 next year.

Nick Raynsford, the junior Environment Minister, said he would look at different methods of using electronic systems to replace the traditional pencil-and-ballot-paper method of voting. One obvious benefit would be much earlier declarations of results.

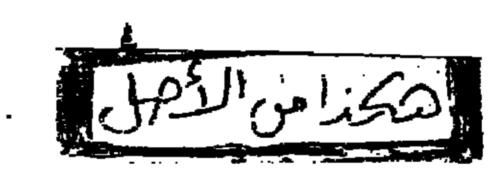
The top option now being considered is the use of an electronic machine installed in a booth in a polling station. The voter would then merely touch a button to enter their choices. But the elections next May will be highly complex, involving four different votes, and the government is open to other suggestions.

There will be two votes for the London Mayor, a first and second preference. If no candidate gets more than 50 per cent all candidates except the top two are eliminated and second preferences re-distributed.

In addition, however, there will also be two votes for members of the new assembly. Each elector can vote for a candidate in their constituency as well as casting a separate vote for the party of their choice.

Mr Raynsford announced yesterday that he would now invite companies to send in their own ideas for providing electronic equipment.

Ken Livingstone, the MP for Brent who has accused the Labour leadership of trying to block his candidature, was delighted by the news. He said that under the old system it would have taken about two days to count the votes, but an electronic system could announce the result within an hour. "Instead of waiting until 4am for the results in Brent, I can be out celebrating at my victory party," he said.



Body exhumed in 29-year mystery of dead children

BY STEWART TENDLER
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

DETECTIVES have reopened their inquiries into the deaths of two children after 29 years to see if they were the victims of paedophiles. Police have exhumed the body of an 11-year-old girl in the hope that scientific advances could provide new clues.

The body of Susan Blatchford was found with that of Gary Hanlon, 13, in a shallow grave in Epping Forest in June, 1970. The cause of their deaths, in what became known as the Babes in the Wood case, was never established.

Gary's body was cremated, but police hope that Susan's body could corroborate information they have received about the cause of death. Scientific advances could show the possible use of drugs by an attacker, and evidence of an attack or an assault. Scotland Yard confirmed yesterday that Susan's body had been exhumed from a churchyard in Enfield, North London. Samples were taken by a pathologist and the body was reburied within 24 hours as forensic scientists began tests.



'Babes in wood' deaths remain a mystery



Susan Blatchford, left, and Gary Hanlon, and a headline from the inquest in 1970. Now police hope that scientific advances could help to solve the case

The exhumation was carried out after police under Detective Chief Inspector Robin Scott worked for months to substantiate the new information. Susan's family agreed to the exhumation, which was authorised by the Home Office.

The children disappeared from their homes at Enfield in March 1970. Susan had asked Gary if he wanted to go for a walk one afternoon. There was speculation that they had run away together. The bodies were found by a man walking his dog about 30 minutes walk from their homes.

The bodies had lain too long for scientists in the early 1970s to find very much. At the inquest, the pathologist, James Cameron, said that Gary's clothes had not been disturbed, but that Susan's stockings, pants, bra and shoes had been removed. He said that the clothing could have been removed by animals and he could not tell if death was from foul play or exposure. The Coroner, Charles Clark, recorded an open verdict.

Afterwards Muriel Blatchford, the girl's mother, said: "The only animal that could remove Susan's bra, pants and tights is a human animal." Yesterday, ex-Detective Chief Superintendant Leonard "Nipper" Read, who led the investigation, said he had always believed the deaths were murder. Mr Read, who also led investigations into the Kray twins, said: "I was always convinced, but there was so little to determine the cause of death."

The case was reopened briefly in 1984 and then a second time three years ago by officers from a murder squad in North London after they were given new information. The Yard has refused to discuss the source of the new inquiry in the hope that the informant could provide more details.

Scientific advances over the past decade include DNA techniques that can identify suspects from a particle of hair or a flake of skin, and toxicology tests that can identify a wide range of chemicals from minute samples. Traces of opiates and barbiturates can be identified in hair and nails. Teeth may also hold traces of a drug.

Fingerprint work means that more and more surfaces can now yield prints including plastic surfaces such as bags. Uncovering fibres and making matches has also become more accurate.

Kubrick film clip ruled too explicit

BY CAROL MIDGLEY, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

THE first scenes from *Eyes Wide Shut*, the final film made by Stanley Kubrick, were released yesterday and promptly judged too explicit to be shown on television.

Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman are seen naked and having sex in front of a large mirror in the 90-second trailer that the film director, who died on Sunday, made to show cinema owners.

The movie has been almost three years in the making, largely because of Kubrick's exacting standards.

The trailer was released at the ShoWest convention for the film industry in Las Vegas on Wednesday, but the American television networks considered it too risqué and cut it to ten seconds.

One television announcer said: "Large portions of this trailer are unsuitable for television audiences. It has not even been rated because there are very explicit sex scenes between Kidman and Cruise."

In Australia, one television network placed a roll of negative film across the couple's naked bodies while others would show only shots of them kissing.

Cruise and Kidman, who are married in real life, play psychologists who are married but cheat on each other with their patients. The screenplay by Frederic Raphael, which explores sexual jealousy and obsession, is based on *Traumnovelle*, by Arthur Schnitzler.

The trailer, which was not intended for a general audience, is not likely to be seen in its entirety in Britain for some time. Trailers cannot be shown until the British Board of Film Classification has given the film a certificate. That will not be for several months, since *Eyes Wide Shut* is not expected to be released here until the summer, several weeks after its release in the States.

Julian Senior, marketing vice-president for Warner Bros, said: "This is not intended as an all-audience trailer; it is an excerpt that was chosen by Stanley Kubrick to give cinema owners a sense of the film."

The film was Kubrick's first since *Full Metal Jacket* in 1987. The director, who also made *A Clockwork Orange* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*, had been adding the final touches when he died at his home in Hertfordshire.





Scenes from the trailer for *Eyes Wide Shut* that American television viewers will not be allowed to see in full. It features Nicole Kidman and her husband, Tom Cruise

Nurses warn of danger in using essential oils

Ian Murray on aromatherapy risk to children and pregnant women

ESSENTIAL oils can be dangerous, especially to children and pregnant women, nurses said yesterday.

With aromatherapy now one of the most fashionable of all complementary medicines, delegates attending the Royal College of Nursing's annual congress in Harrogate called for better labelling and more regulation of the use of oils to stop them becoming a health hazard.

Essential oils used in aromatherapy are distilled essences derived from plants. There are about 30 commonly used essences, ranging from basil and bergamot to lavender, rose, sage and teatree.

Retail sales of such oils increased by 70 per cent between 1992 and 1994, according to the latest available figures, but that rate is known to be accelerating. Sales now top £14 million a year and the number of practitioners registered with the Aromatherapy Organisations Council has soared from 2,500 to 6,000 in seven years.

The council has a code of conduct for members, but it represents only those therapists who are prepared to abide by its rules. At present, anybody can set up as an aromatherapist and there is no control over or licensing of the products they use or sell.

Although reputable makers sell high-quality products, prices can be high. Because there are no proper regulations, cut-price versions containing a very low proportion of essential oils are increasingly available on market stalls, where they find buyers among fashion-conscious but poorer customers.

Kath Ryan, a nurse and trained aromatherapist from Birmingham, told the congress that even the best essential oils were dangerous if used in strong concentrations. If too much was used, the oils could cause rashes, skin burning, nausea and vomiting. Pregnant women using them had miscarried and there was evidence that the oils could cause liver disease.

"The labelling of a lot of oils is insufficient and only tells you to put a few drops in a bath, to avoid skin contact and not to take it internally," she said. "The label usually does not tell you what oils are there and names are given in Latin, which doesn't mean anything to most people."

She said manufacturers of good-quality, pure oils were always willing to send information about their products, but users might still not understand how to use and dilute them to ensure that they would not cause harm.

"People just don't realise how strong these oils can be," she said. "Just by smelling them you can lift molecules out which will start circulating in the bloodstream. These oils are natural products but they are potent."

Miss Ryan is conducting a three-year research trial at Birmingham Women's Hospital using essential oils on patients to reduce high blood pressure before operations. She said that she has been able to give an aromatherapy massage and reduce the blood pressure of patients who were anxious before an operation.

Carole Cunningham, a nurse and aromatherapist from York, said: "We would also like to see the companies who sell these oils having specific knowledge about what they are selling, and there needs to be better regulation about the training and education of aromatherapists."

ROY RILEY



Essential oils can harm children, nurses have warned

USES AND RISKS

Lavender: steam distilled from flowering tops of plant. For stress, insomnia, skin problems. May cause uterine bleeding. Consult a professional if pregnant.

Rosemary: steam distilled from flowering tops. For headaches, sluggishness, fluid retention. Should not be used by pregnant women, epileptics or those with high blood pressure. Can cause skin irritation and should be used in high dilutions.

Bergamot: cold-pressed from peel. For skin infections, anxiety. If applied to skin can cause severe sunburn.

Eucalyptus: steam distilled from leaves. For colds, poor circulation, muscular aches. Do not use on children. Toxic if taken internally. Can cause skin irritation. Use in high dilutions.

Peppermint: steam distilled from leaves. For nausea, fatigue. Should not be used by pregnant women. Causes headache in large doses and can also cause irritation of the skin.

Marjoram: steam distilled from flowering tops. For insomnia, period pain, sprained muscles. Should not be used by pregnant women. Stupefying in large quantities.

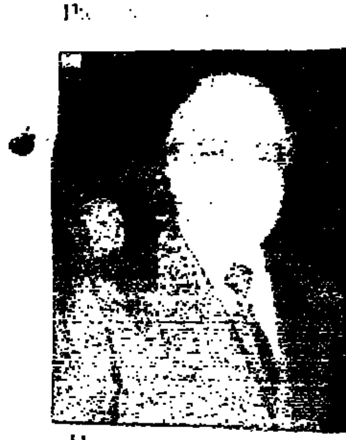
Sweet fennel: steam distilled from crushed seeds. Muscle relaxant, stimulates breast milk. Should not be used by pregnant women, epileptics, children under six.

Sage: steam distilled from leaves. For headaches, dandruff, poor circulation. Should not be used by pregnant women, epileptics or those with high blood pressure. Always use in moderation.

Thyme: steam distilled from leaves and flowers. For colds, acne, low immune system. Not for use by pregnant women, those with high blood pressure. Toxic in high doses.

Myrrh: extracted from the resin of shrub. For inflammation, athlete's foot, asthma. Should not be used by pregnant women.

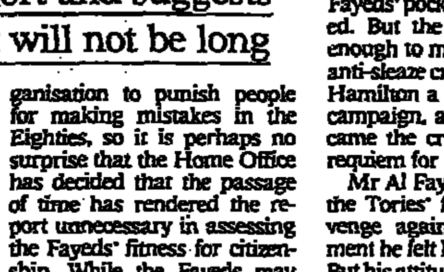
Exil... foun...



Fans may not get into big fight



Exile who may have found a home at last



Michael Gove traces the Fayeds' quest for a passport and suggests Mohamed's wait will not be long

HE HAS been the most controversial man to come out of Egypt since Moses. And like that Prince of the Nile, Mohamed Al Fayed has been in exile for most of his life. It was Moses's brother, Aaron, who eventually made it to the Promised Land. And it has been Mohamed Al Fayed's brother, Ali, who has succeeded in the long quest for the promised passport. But this morning Mohamed has good reason to believe that he may go one better than his Pharaonic predecessor and live to secure his heart's desire.

Jack Straw's statement yesterday strongly suggests that Mr Al Fayed is on approval. The decision to grant his brother citizenship, and the related announcement that passage of time has rendered otiose a critical Department of Trade and Industry report, implies that, if Mohamed can keep his nose clean, he can place his hands on that little maroon book.

Mr Al Fayed's desire to acquire a British passport is, like so much of his life, overlaid by myth and complicated by intrigue. He has spoken in the past of his romantic attachment to Britain, having been inspired by the sight of Her Majesty's sailors steaming through the Suez canal. His desire to join the British establishment led him to hope that his own son might walk down the aisle with Her Majesty's daughter-in-law in the pristine white of those sailors.

But that dream died, along with Diana and his beloved son Dodi in a Paris tunnel on that tragic night in August 1997. It was the most grievous of many reverses in a remarkable career. But it has been a career almost more notable for Mr Al Fayed's resilience and recoveries from his wounds, whether self-inflicted or perpetrated by enemies.

He was born into an obscure and genteel poverty he would rather forget, and greatly resents others picking over. The son of an Alexandria schools inspector, he was ashamed of his father's modest background, remarking of him in later life, "He was useless." His past was certainly of no use to him and his brother when they launched their bid for Harrods. It was as princes of Egypt that they mounted their purchase. And it was for allegedly exaggerating their independent wealth that they were subsequently criticised.

But the Home Secretary is clearly determined to allow the past that Mr Al Fayed has done so much to obscure to be forgotten. The DTI report into the brothers' takeover of the House of Fraser was critical of their attempt to exaggerate the grandeur of their status. The inspectors concluded that they had lived in an *Alice in Wonderland* world where "lies were the truth and the truth was a lie".

The brothers vigorously contested a conclusion that they believed was motivated by racism and malice. And if they were unlucky in the choice of inspectors, they were lucky in their main assailant. Their rival for House of Fraser had been the German-born tycoon Tiny Rowland, and it was his energetic opposition that had coloured the report.

But Mr Rowland, a former member of the Hitler Youth, was hardly a sympathetic figure. Mr Al Fayed's biographer, Tom Bower, believes that it was distaste for Mr Rowland that helped the Fayeds to keep their prize. Sir Gordon Borrie, then the Director-General of the Office of Fair Trading, advised the DTI that "the Monopolies Commission does not exist to punish people for lying. The shareholders got the cash. Morality is irrelevant."

New Labour is the last organisation to punish people for making mistakes in the Eighties, so it is perhaps no surprise that the Home Office has decided that the passage of time has rendered the report unnecessary in assessing the Fayeds' fitness for citizenship. While the Fayeds may have been guilty of sharp practice during the Harrods fight, they still delivered by paying the agreed price. The Fayeds also delivered during another fight where sharp practice occurred, a fight that saw Labour rather than House of Fraser shareholders reap dividends.

As part of their long campaign for citizenship, the Fayeds used their money to buy British MPs. One, Tim Smith, resigned after his financial relationship was revealed. His admission in the run-up to the last general election made the stain of sleaze on the Tories indelible. Accusations that another former minister, Neil Hamilton, was also in the Fayeds' pocket are still contested. But the allegations were enough to make Martin Bell's anti-sleaze crusade against Mr Hamilton a theme of the 1997 campaign, a theme which became the crashing coda to a requiem for the Tories.

Mr Al Fayed took delight in the Tories' fall, an act of revenge against an Establishment he felt had betrayed him. But his attitude towards the Establishment has always been ambivalent.

He sponsored the Royal Windsor Horse Show to show his support for the monarchy, just one of a string of charitable endeavours that saw him walk with the well-connected. His most successful invasion of grand circles came with the romance between his son and Diana, Princess of Wales. Although Mr Al Fayed's claims that the couple were to become engaged can never be authenticated, it was, observers attest, a genuine romantic friendship. The confusion and bitterness provoked by conflicting accounts of responsibility for their death have left a bitter aftertaste. But the loss of a beloved son and his lover inspired sympathy even from those not enamoured of him.

Mr Al Fayed has not had to work hard to make enemies. He fell out with his first business partner, the arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi, whose sister was Mohamed's first wife. An earlier search for a passport took him to Haiti, which he left after complications with a diplomatic document and the undying wrath of the country's ruler, Papa Doc Duvalier.

Other business colleagues blanch at the man's name, but some unexpected figures speak up for him. His role in supporting sterling during a past crisis is referred to favourably by some Tories, and he has recently found a persuasive evangelist in Kevin Keegan, manager of his Fulham football team, whom he has released to manage England. In having Keegan pay generous tribute to him, Mr Al Fayed has reached parts of the country even Harrods hampers couldn't. If Keegan proves to be England's passport to football glory, then perhaps Mohamed might find his own passport in the post.



A Harrods shop window yesterday. Mohamed Al Fayed's long wait for British citizenship may soon be over



Harrods victors: Mohamed Al Fayed and his brother Ali

Fans may not get into big fight

By Richard Duce and James Bone in New York

THOUSANDS of British boxing fans will arrive in New York this weekend to discover that tickets they bought for the most important heavyweight bout in decades do not exist.

Some 6,000 British fans are expected for Lennox Lewis's match with Evander Holyfield but there were fears last night that barely half that number would get in to see it. Some could even be without an hotel room for the night.

Many of the fans arriving for the fight at Madison Square Garden tomorrow night will find that tickets pledged by agencies in Britain either never existed or have been sold on by American brokers at a higher price. It raises the prospect of Lewis supporters having to watch the fight on television in New York hotels and bars. Black-market tickets are changing hands at more than six times face value.

Concern is such that Frank Maloney, the British promoter for the bout which will decide the undisputed world heavyweight champion, yesterday demanded an audience with the Mayor of New York, Rudolph Giuliani, who said he would be happy to meet him.

Mr Maloney said: "I have met fans who have told me they have been promised tickets and they are not here. My advice to fans is that if they do not have a ticket, stay at home and watch it on television."

After the disastrous allocation of football World Cup tickets last year, it is expected that there will be renewed calls for a system under which a company that sells a ticket to a sporting event is liable to refund any money if the ticket fails to materialise.

First-wave students of surf sought

By Hannah Betts

THE world's first university degree course in surfing was unveiled yesterday with an entry requirement of two B grades at A level. Up to 25 students are being sought for the three-year BSc at Plymouth University in September.

The Surf Science and Technology programme will involve practical sessions as soon as conditions off the Devon coast allow, but the Beach Boys will be absent from the syllabus in favour of more academic pursuits.

Dr Malcolm Findlay of Plymouth's Institute of Marine Studies, one of the course's co-founders, is aware that it may sound like a beach bums' charter, but he says there is a need for mortar boards in the multimillion-pound surf industry.

"It is novel and we do expect people's first reaction to be 'Hey, dude! Let's head to the beach and have a good time!' But it simply won't be like that. Surfing is a recreational activity, but it's also a huge global industry that includes an awful lot of science.

"This is the first academically rigorous surf science course in the world — we couldn't even find one in California."

In their first year, undergraduates will focus on oceanography, surfing materials and business studies. In the second year, the course will encompass human biology and human performance. For their finals, students will develop their own specialism within surfing science.

On the strength of current inquiries, the surfing dons are expecting a tidal wave of applications. From these beginnings Plymouth hopes to become a centre of excellence for surfing sciences and even offer surfing PhDs.

Clegg cleared of murder but branded liar by judge

Sinn Fein says verdict is an insult to family of dead Belfast teenager, reports **Martin Fletcher**



Karen Reilly and the bullet-ridden stolen car in which she was a back-seat passenger

PARATROOPER Lee Clegg was acquitted yesterday of the 1990 murder of a teenage joyrider in Belfast despite being branded a liar by the judge.

Clegg, 30, wept at a verdict that ended a long legal battle to clear his name, but Mr Justice Kerr did find him guilty on a second charge of attempting to wound the car's driver. Clegg was released on bail until sentenced but legal experts said that he was unlikely to be re-imprisoned as he had already spent four years in custody.

Last night it emerged that Clegg's barrister had written to the judge and Northern Ireland Secretary during the retrial asking that he be released if convicted.

In yesterday's judgment Mr Justice Kerr called much of Clegg's defence "untruthful and incapable of belief" but said he could not be certain that Clegg had fired the fatal shot that killed 18-year-old Karen Reilly. "I think it very likely that he did but I cannot be sure of it," he said. Clegg's legal adviser said that neither the soldier nor his family immediately understood the verdict but when it was explained to them in a back room later they were "totally overwhelmed" and "broke down in tears". He will return to England today.

Ms Reilly's father, Sean, left the court distressed but saying nothing. Sinn Fein called the verdict an insult to Ms Reilly's family and said that it "couldn't have come at a worse time when people are working very hard to build and consolidate the peace process".

When Lance Corporal Clegg was released from prison in 1995 there were riots in republican areas but the RUC was not on heightened alert last night.

Clegg cleared his name at his fifth hearing in six years before 13 different judges. The extraordinary legal saga, that has aroused deep passions on both sides of the Irish Sea, began on the night of September 30, 1990, when his 17-man patrol was manning a checkpoint on the Glen Road in republican West Belfast.

At midnight a stolen Vauxhall Astra sped towards the checkpoint. Clegg, 21 at the time, opened fire. His colleagues followed suit. The driver, Martin Peake, 17, was killed. So was Ms Reilly, his backseat passenger. A post-mortem examination indicated that she had been killed by a bullet from Clegg's rifle.

In the paratroopers' mess a montage appeared showing the Astra with the caption 'Built by Robots. Driven by Joyriders. Stopped by Paras'.

In 1991 Clegg was arrested and charged with murdering Ms Reilly and attempting to murder Peake. He was convicted in 1993 and sentenced to life imprisonment.

He appealed unsuccessfully in 1994 but in July 1995 Sir Patrick Mayhew, then Northern Ireland Secretary, freed him on licence after a huge campaign on his behalf in England that collected a million signatures. Riots erupted in Belfast and Londonderry but Clegg returned to his regiment as a physical education instructor and was promoted to lance corporal.

He appealed unsuccessfully to the House of Lords but last year had his conviction quashed and won a retrial after his lawyers presented fresh ballistic evidence. Mr Justice Kerr based yesterday's judgment on 4,000 pages of detailed technical evidence from the 39-day trial. The gist of Clegg's defence was that he shot the fatal fourth bullet that killed Ms Reilly at the side of the speeding car to defend himself and his colleagues, not at the vehicle's rear in what the prosecution alleged was an unjustified use of force.

In his 189-page judgment, which took five hours to read, Mr Justice Kerr dismissed as lies and fabrications many of the cornerstones of Clegg's defence.

He said that Clegg had indeed fired his last shot at the back of the car. Clegg had actually opened fire when the car was still some distance from any member of the patrol, and described evidence about where he was standing in relation to the other soldiers as a "farrago of deceit and untruths".

He accused Clegg of lying when he claimed that the car had struck one of the soldiers, and said that the soldier had subsequently been struck with a rifle butt by his colleagues to make it look as if he had been hit by the vehicle.

The judge rejected Clegg's "concocted" story that the patrol had just received an intelligence warning of an imminent IRA attack in that area.

However, having given the court the impression that he was going to convict Clegg of murder, Mr Justice Kerr announced that he was not convinced that the paratrooper had fired the fatal shot through the back of the car.



Clegg, who wept when the verdict was explained to him, will return to England today

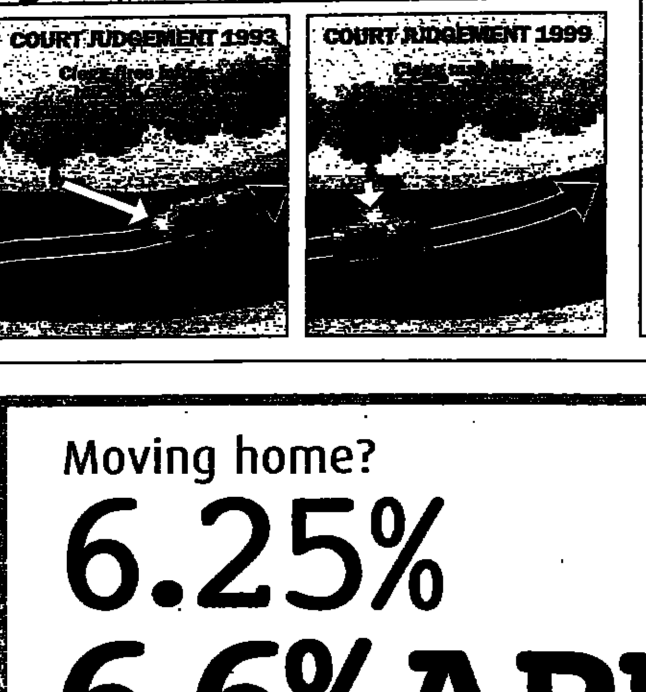
He said it was also possible that he and his colleagues genuinely believed that they were in imminent danger.

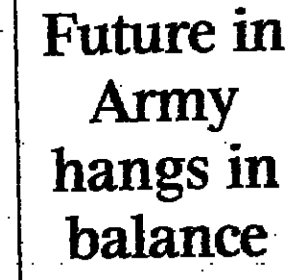
"I am not prepared to convict in relation to the discharge of that shot," Mr Justice Kerr said. "He must, therefore, be acquitted of the offence."

Joe Hendron, West Belfast's nationalist SDLP MP at the time of the murder, did not directly criticise the judge but said that the two joyriders had been "summarily executed by the elite of the British Army" and the ruling showed there was one set of rules for soldiers and another for civilians. No paramilitary had ever been found in a joyrider's car.

However, Ken Maginnis, the Ulster Unionist Party's security spokesman, expressed "relief that justice has been done". He said it was important to understand the intense pressure faced by young soldiers operating on the front line of a terrorist war and had to make split-second decisions.

Simon McKay, the paratrooper's legal adviser, said that Ms Reilly's death "will always be on Lee Clegg's consience".





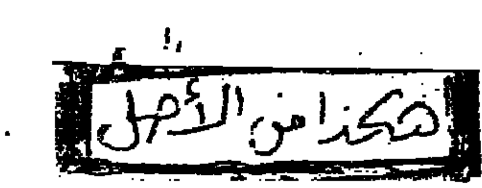
Future in Army hangs in balance

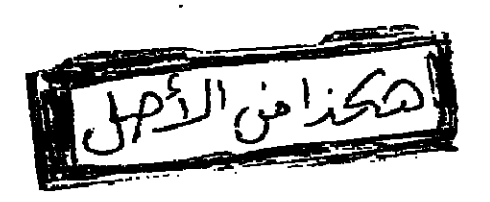
DOUBT again surrounded Lance Corporal Clegg's future in the Army last night after his conviction on the charge of attempting to wound with intent was upheld. A prison sentence could result in his discharge.

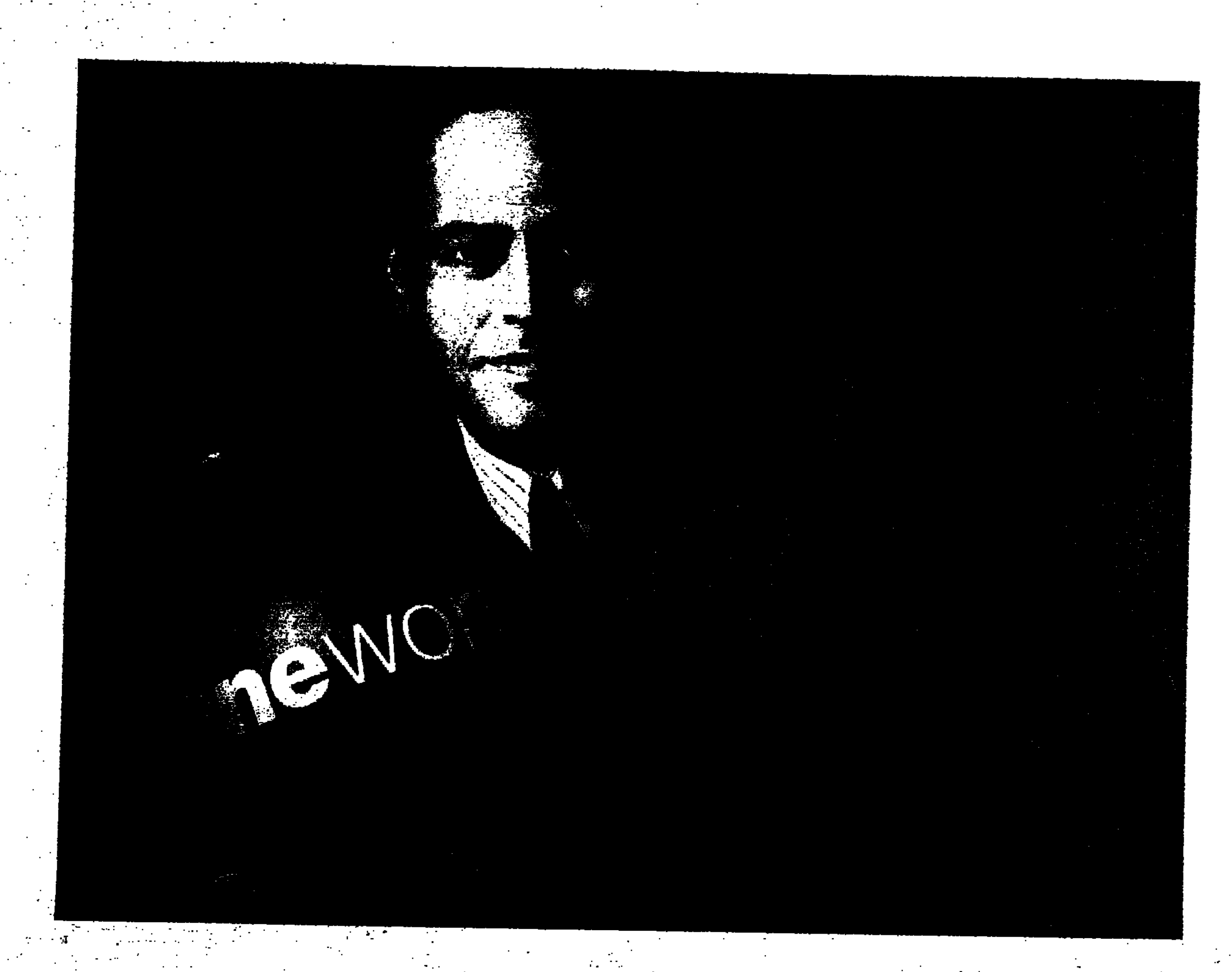
However, since he was immediately reinstated in the Army when released from prison in July 1995, after serving four years for murder, it seems unlikely that he will be discharged if his planned appeal against the wounding conviction fails.

The Army Board would hear representations from the paratrooper himself before making a decision. A spokesman for the Army said that Lance Corporal Clegg would stay in his job as a physical training instructor at the infantry training centre at Catterrick, Yorkshire, until his legal case had been resolved.









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Wembley is sold for £103m to FA-backed consortium

Work to rebuild stadium for 2006 World Cup bid will start next year, write Adrian Lee and John Goodbody

WEMBLEY Stadium was sold yesterday for £103 million to a consortium backed by the Football Association. The ground, with its famous Twin Towers, will be demolished and rebuilt.

A new 90,000-seater stadium — which the new owners said would be the finest in the world — will now form the centrepiece of England's bid for the 2006 World Cup.

Demolition work will begin on the 76-year-old ground in northwest London next autumn, with a scheduled completion date of August 2003. The £20 million cost of retaining the twin towers puts their future in jeopardy.

Although the majority of shareholders opposed yesterday's sale, which leaves the neighbouring Wembley Arena concert venue in the hands of the present owner, Wembley plc, the block vote of City institutions proved crucial.

Sir Bobby Charlton, one of the ambassadors for England's bid to bring the World Cup back to this country, said: "We have the best bid in the world with Wembley behind it. We have had to be patient, but I am really pleased that it has now gone through and we can plan for the future." Sir Geoff Hurst, another supporter, said: "The name Wembley has a magnetism and excitement that is unique. That will not change."

The tight rebuilding schedule could, however, cost Britain the 2003 World Athletics championships, which begin five months after the £300 million redevelopment is expected to finish. France could now secure the slot.

Demolition work should begin after the millennium Cup Final is held in the stadium.

The decision to sell the stadium yesterday was opposed by three non-executive directors of Wembley plc and several independent shareholders. Jarvis Astaire, the deputy chairman, argued that the offer from the English National Stadium Development Company — the name of the consortium — was too low.

The rebels favoured a bid by the American company SFX, of £220 million for the entire Wembley complex, including the stadium, arena and conference venues.

The promoter who brought Live Aid and the Three Tenors to Wembley also condemned the sale of the stadium to the Football Association consortium. Barely able to conceal his anger, Harvey Goldsmith said: "I think it is appalling. It is the most ill-conceived deal I have ever heard of."

He described Wembley as "the biggest brand name in the world" and said that the decision to split the stadium's management from the neighbouring arena would prove disastrous. He feared that the outdated arena, a former swimming pool with a capacity of 10,000, would now lie untouched for years while the stadium was redeveloped.

"The whole site should be developed at the same time, as one entertainment complex of which the country could be proud. Now what we are going to see is the stadium rebuilt in the middle of a mess. All this rubbish about the World Cup — you can't have it in the middle of a bomb site."

He was also scathing about the prospect of the Football Association running the stadium. "Look at how the FA runs the FA. That speaks for itself."

The new-look Wembley, home of the FA Cup Final since 1923, will include a hotel, banqueting centre, restaurants and a visitor centre.

Chris Smith, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, welcomed the decision and promised that the new ground would be the best in the world.

The stadium now: big changes are planned in the rebuilding

Looking ahead: Sir Bobby Charlton and Sir Geoff Hurst at Wembley yesterday

Flood repairs to await dry-out

By Paul Wilkinson
North East Correspondent

IT COULD be months before people caught in the Ryedale floods can begin full restoration of their homes and businesses. Insurers facing a bill of up to £100 million have said that owners must wait until properties have dried out completely before starting repairs.

Last night, officials warned people to keep out of the flood water as it could be contaminated with raw sewage. A North Yorkshire council spokesman said: "Those with children should take care to stop them playing in the water. It could be a source of serious infections. We have been assured by Yorkshire Water that the drinking-water supplies remain clean."

Vic Rance, of the Association of British Insurers, said that if people rushed to put things right before all dampness had dried out, they would make things worse. He said: "Insurers should be moving fast when it comes to payouts, but obviously people have to allow their homes to dry out and this could take a few months."

The association has already made comparisons with flooding which hit the Midlands last April, costing insurers more than £100 million. Mr Rance said: "The damage in Ryedale could be as much."

The Environment Agency said it would be at least a week before the water levels had dropped enough for the clean-up operation to begin. More than 200 homes and at least 100 business have suffered in the worst floods since records began more that a century ago. Many had just a few inches of water in the ground floor, but some had water up to 5ft deep.

Local trading standards officers yesterday warned residents to beware of cowboy builders who may target the area and add to their misery.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Assault on vandal unjustified

A man who caught a youth vandalising one of his fleet of buses was ordered to do 100 hours of community service after tying the boy's legs with wire and threatening to throw him into the docks.

At Cardiff Crown Court, Judge David Aubrey told Gordon Fifield, 53, of Barry, South Glamorgan: "There can be no justification for the way you reacted." The youth, 14, was conditionally discharged.

Coma teenager

Lincolnshire health authority is to continue paying £1,400 a week to treat a boy in a coma since last April. Gregory Dygas, 17, from Louth, was said to be brain-dead, but is semi-conscious and improving.

Website abuse

Abusive messages, purportedly sent between pupils at The King's School in Ely and at the City of Ely Community College, were posted on a city Website aimed at tourists. The schools are investigating.

Early visitor

A 12ft basking shark has been reported off Land's End, believed to be the earliest in the year that a shark has been sighted off the southwest coast since records began, the Wildlife Trust reported.

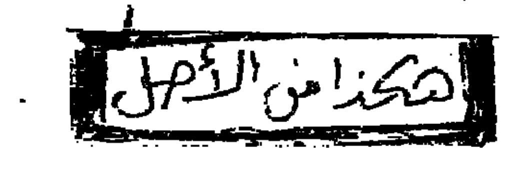
Confession call

Roman Catholic bishops are calling on the 4.2 million Catholics in England and Wales to go to confession before the next millennium. A booklet published next month sets out the importance of confession.

ArtWatch lecture

Tickets for the ArtWatch lecture tonight at Burlington House, London, will not, as stated in a report yesterday, be available on the door.

TODAY IN Section 2
MEDIA
Read all about the ex-girlfriend of the boyfriend of the ex-wife of the boyfriend of Anthea Turner. Tabloid lunacy – page 40





Prince is caught in election infighting

As royal party arrives in Uruguay, **Alan Hamilton** reports on the fallout from that Falklands speech

THE Prince of Wales left Argentina after a three-day official visit yesterday with the feeling that he had become a pawn in the country's internal politics as it moves towards a presidential election.

Fallout from his speech on the Falkland Islanders' right to self-determination continued to dog him on his last day in the country before flying across the River Plate to the safe neutrality of Uruguay, where he will spend two days before visiting the Falklands.

His visit to Uruguay will emphasise its developing commercial relationship with Britain. Last night the Prince laid a wreath at the memorial to General Artigas, the Uruguayan national hero, and dined at the President's palace.

Today he will meet business people and tomorrow flies to the naval base at Punta del Este, where Britain has supplied much of the equipment.

The Prince was to have visited a shanty town on the outskirts of Buenos Aires yesterday, but the engagement was cancelled by his Argentinian hosts. Carlos Ruckauf, the Vice-President, who called the Prince's speech "intolerable", said that the visit had been cancelled because the Prince's safety could not be guaranteed.

However, royal itinerary officials said that there was simply not enough time to make the journey to the edges of the vast city.

Señor Ruckauf is expected to stand in the October elections for the powerful and lucrative post of Governor of Buenos Aires province. Fernando de la Rua, on the other hand, is the opposition Alliance Party candidate to succeed Carlos Menem as the country's President.

He is head of the Buenos Aires city government, and yesterday was host to the Prince at an exhibition of British architecture in the city. Suddenly, however, he directed the Prince into a side room for an unscheduled five-minute private audience.

"President Menem had his private talk with the Prince on Tuesday; his rival appeared not to want to be outdone," one of the Prince's staff observed.

Guido di Tella, the country's Anglophile but outgoing Foreign Minister, hailed the Prince's visit as a great success. "Of course there are a few people who disagree," he said. "We have extremists, and also politicians who are playing local politics."

Tony Lloyd, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, which sent the Prince to Argentina, said: "Prince Charles made the kind of speech that was parallel to the speech that President Menem made in London last year. We know we have differences on the Falklands. It is legitimate, though, to talk about a peaceful way of containing that process."

The country's Lower House of Congress has voted by a 159 majority that any attempt by Señor Menem to seek a third term as President would be a violation of the Constitution and a usurping of power.

The vote does not have the weight of law but carries a strong political message. Carlos Corach, Argentina's interior minister, has said that Señor Menem had not made up his mind about running.

Buenos Aires newspapers were still reeling yesterday at the Prince's speech. *La Nación*, under the headline "Only a sentence, but what a sentence!", said that Señor Menem and his Government were taken by surprise by the Falklands remarks, and speculated that the speech was a coded hint of eventual Falklands independence from Britain.

Leading article, page 23

'ROW' DISMISSED

Relations between Argentina and Britain are expected to be undamaged by the spat in Buenos Aires (Michael Evans writes). The Argentinian Foreign Minister and the country's Ambassador to Britain fully approved the Prince's remark about Argentina needing to live "amicably" with its offshore neighbour, and the Foreign Office was sanguine. Rogelio Pfirter, the ambassador, said: "We have said that we have no quarrel with the political reference made by His Royal Highness and, from our side, there is no row."



The Prince of Wales meeting spectators after his polo team beat the Hurlingham Club 9-7 in Buenos Aires

Next stop: land of the full monty

By Robin Young

HAVING done his bit for Anglo-Argentine relationships, the Prince of Wales next pays a call on Uruguay, one of South America's smallest countries.

The Oriental Republic of Uruguay, sandwiched on the South Atlantic coast between Argentina and Brazil, is about the same size as mainland Britain. The population is only three million, half of which lives in the capital, Montevideo.

The next most famous town is Fray Bentos, which gave corned beef its brand name when a London meat firm began operations there in 1864.

Wool is the principal export and, it has been suggested, the origin of the expression (and film title) "the full Monty". The best sheepskins were said to have come from Uruguay and were shipped from Montevideo, so that fleecepackers graded them as "full Monte".

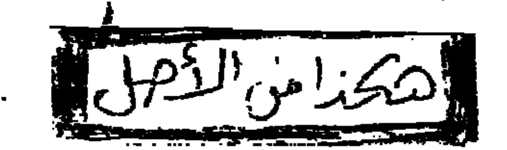
The country's best-known writer is Juan Carlos Onetti (works include *No Man's Land* and *A Brief Life*), but other famous Uruguayans tend to be sportsmen, such as Gustavo Poyet, the Chelsea midfielder, and Pablo Lemoine, who plays rugby union for Bristol.

Uruguay won the inaugural World Cup in 1930, beating Argentina 4-2 at home in the final. It failed to qualify for France 98, being beaten in the qualifiers by Argentina.

Since winning its independence from Spain in 1825, Uruguay's politics have been dominated by two parties, the Colorados, ("reds", or Liberals) and the Blancos ("whites", or Conservatives). Their rivalry punctuated the 19th century with frequent civil wars.

Thanks to José Batlle y Ordóñez, the Colorado President in 1903-1907 and 1911-1915, Uruguay became the first welfare state in Latin America. Recently the two traditional parties have been in coalition to keep a left-wing alliance out of power.

Among the idiosyncracies of Uruguayan law, it is notable that a husband who finds his wife in bed with another man can claim the right to cut off her nose and castrate her lover.


هكذا من الأصل

Women urged not to desert cancer testing

By Ian Murray, medical correspondent

ROUTINE breast cancer screening in Britain is now as good as the high standards reached in the clinical trials that led to it being introduced ten years ago, according to Julietta Patnick, national co-ordinator for the NHS breast-screening programme.

Staff involved in clinical trials are usually better trained and more highly dedicated than those doing routine work, so their results tend to be better. Ms Patnick admitted yesterday that screening was not 100 per cent accurate, but she believed the programme was saving more than 1,000 lives a year.

She said that, despite this, some women were cancelling appointments for a screening after a Swedish study of more than 600,000 women who had been screened showed no significant reduction in death from the disease. The study, published this month, also said that 4,000 women were having operations and breasts removed unnecessarily after screening led to incorrect diagnoses of cancer.

"If women cancel, that is up to them," Ms Patnick said. "Only three out of five women [in Britain] come for a screening. But we have carried out ten million of them, far more than the Swedish study. It will take eight to ten years before we can definitely say we are saving lives, but we believe it is saving 1,000 lives a year or more."

Sweden pioneered breast cancer screening, but Goran Sjonell, one of the team involved in the new research, said that screenings had probably been introduced there only because clinical trials gave a wrong impression of how useful a programme would be. "We think that the findings illustrate the difference between trial conditions and real clinical practice," he said.

The Swedish study, which appeared in the journal *Lakartidningen*, has been strongly criticised by Mans Rosen, deputy director general of the National Board of Health and Welfare in Stockholm. Writing to the *British Medical Journal*, he said that the research would not have passed the tests for peer-reviewed publication in the *BMJ* or "other distinguished journals". The researchers had not considered, for instance, that breast-cancer incidence trends varied among the 18 Swedish county councils studied, thereby influencing mortality trends.

The national board in Sweden had no plans to change its advice on breast cancer screening "based on such a defective study", he said.

Michael Baum, Professor of Surgery at University College London, said that the Swedish report widened the debate over how the NHS should allocate its resources.

CALL FOR A SINGLE CANCER CENTRE

The public and private sectors should settle their differences, pool resources and establish a single UK Cancer Centre in London for research and training, according to Karol Sikora, the British oncologist who is in charge of the World Health Organisation's cancer programme (Ian Murray writes).

Professor Sikora says in the *British Medical Journal* today that the need for a leading institution has never been greater, because cancer therapy is likely to change soon with new treatment strategies. "What is needed to bring this concept to fruition is political will and capital investment by the public and private sectors," he says. "This would defuse the interpersonal bickering that characterises hospital and university mergers."



Cristina Ortiz's autumn collection for Lanvin, in Paris, featured bootleg trousers, new-style boob tubes, and simple yet beautiful evening dresses

Refined Ortiz finds a look of her own

From Deborah Brett in Paris

CRISTINA ORTIZ, the former design director of Prada, seems to be finally settling into her role at Lanvin.

After three seasons the Spanish designer, 33, has managed to break away and create a look more her own. This is still sleek, with emphasis on detailing, but, spurning Prada's gimmicks, Ortiz sticks with the refined approach suited to the Lanvin customer, and hopes to attract some new ones.

Nevertheless, disco fever — which has come to Paris this season — hit the catwalk at yesterday's show, with glitter-speckled eyes, flowing tresses and hip-skimming molten leather trousers gliding down a mirrored catwalk. The look was long, lean and polished, with flattering bootleg trousers making a comeback, and versions of the boob tube that were tight around the top and blousoned out around the waist.

For evening, there were long skirts and shift dresses in white, menthol and sherbet lime, which, from afar, may have seemed like sacks, but close-up looked more interesting. Forget regular darts: Ortiz constructed convex or concave seams to create shapes that transformed the line of the dress. The simplest of dresses were made exceptionally beautiful and glittering, with vermilion or turquoise sequins.

Luxury went into overdrive: clothes were made from cashgora (cashmere and angora), cashmere stretch, double face cashmere and cashmere and angora polar fleeces.

40% of GPs attacked by patients

THE increase in violent attacks by patients on doctors and other staff is prompting the creation of a "fortress NHS" (Ian Murray writes).

A survey published today in *BMA News* shows that four out of ten GPs and a quarter of all hospital doctors have been assaulted by the patients they were trying to treat. The trend has persuaded four out of five family doctors to introduce security measures.

"I feel wary when at work," said Jennifer Langdon, a Berkshire GP. "All staff are trained in security matters and we have panic buttons in every room and closed-circuit television." A Somerset GP said: "We are more like Fort Knox than a medical centre."

John Chisholm, chairman of the BMA's GPs' committee, said it was very worrying. "Doctors and their staff are increasingly in the line of fire for violence, the threat of violence and verbal abuse."

Nurses admit to racism in NHS

By Ian Murray

THE Royal College of Nursing admitted yesterday that institutionalised racism existed among nurses and was blocking the careers of ethnic minorities in the National Health Service.

In an emotive debate, during which some black nurses ran crying from the hall, Christine Hancock, the general secretary, told the RCN's annual congress in Harrogate that, as the sixth largest union in the country, members reflected the strengths and weaknesses of society.

"I have to tell you I do not believe the RCN is any freer of institutionalised racism than any other large organisation," she said. "It is difficult for those of use who are white to really know and understand these issues. Whitening black people so we don't notice them isn't the answer. It's valuing their blackness.

"We can only give the best care to patients if we value all our colleagues. We must listen when they tell us about their experience of racism."

Margaret Moore, a nurse tutor from London, said she was reluctant to recruit students from ethnic minorities because she did not want them to be treated as she had been. "I am visible as a black woman and a nurse," she said. "I am here to stay and I want my contribution of over 30 years to health care to be recognised."

A motion was carried overwhelmingly calling on the RCN to address issues related to institutionalised racism.

Christine Watson, the RCN president, said earlier this week that racism was widespread in the NHS. "You're more likely to find black nurses working night duty, less likely to find black nurses promoted into specialist areas."

Schools racism, page 22

IRA steps up exile punishments

'Peace process' has an ironic ring for those banished from Northern Ireland, writes **Martin Fletcher**

FOUR masked IRA men, including one who was armed, went to Mary O'Reilly's terraced home on Londonderry's grim Creggan estate one night last week. They barged inside as she opened the door. "Where's Gerry?" they demanded. Mrs O'Reilly said her 22-year-old son no longer lived there, but three of the men began searching the house while the one with the gun pushed her into the living room.

"What's this all about?" asked Mrs O'Reilly. "You know, missus," the man replied. When she persisted he told her to ask at the local Sinn Fein office in the morning. The search proved fruitless. The armed man looked at the clock. It was 8.15pm. "Tell Gerry he has till 8.15 on Thursday — 48 hours — to get out of Derry for a year," he said.

Gerry had already gone. He, his pregnant girlfriend and their three-year-old daughter had fled two weeks earlier after the IRA visited his home on a neighbouring estate. He had escaped by climbing on to the roof. In 1995 he had spent four days in hospital after a gang beat him with sledgehammers and nail-studded clubs, then left him 10p to call an ambulance.

He is now living with his family in emergency accommodation provided by Northern Ireland's Housing Executive just outside the city. He has bolts on the doors and sleeps with two baseball bats by his bed. "He's a nervous wreck," said his mother.

Mary O'Reilly is not her real name. She dares not identify herself for fear of reprisals. Nor is her son's case in any way exceptional. In fact, he got off lightly. Loyalist and republican paramilitaries have exiled hundreds of people during the Troubles — petty criminals, the politically troublesome, those who threaten their rackets. Most were exiled from the Province, not just their communities. The practice is tolerated as a fact of life on Northern Ireland's paramilitary-controlled estates and those exiled are usually given 24 or 72 hours to get out.

Londonderry's West Bank, from where families and individuals have had to flee after falling foul of paramilitary "justice"

Voluntary organisations provide them with tickets to England or Scotland and temporary accommodation. Because most left quickly and silently, their cases attracted little attention, said Vincent McKenna of the Belfast human rights group Families Against Intimidation and Terror (Fait). Unlike punishment beatings and kneecappings, "it's an easy way for terrorists to get rid of someone without any outcry".

Far from diminishing, the practice had "dramatically increased" during the ceasefire, said a spokesman for one of the volunteer groups. Entire families were now being banished. The paramilitaries had to show that they were still in control. With each exile they were sending out the message: "We have not gone away."

Reliable figures are scarce, but that organisation is helping about two families and two individuals each month. Fait claims that 440 men, women and children were exiled last year, and 148 so far this. An RUC spokesman confirmed that "the disgraceful practice of excluding people from their homeland is continuing at a worrying rate".

Mrs O'Reilly and her husband admit that their son is a petty criminal who has served four years for burglaries and car theft.

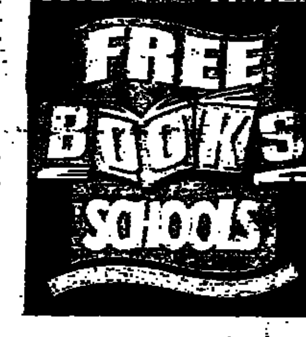
"He's not even a good thief — he gets caught," she said. But "if he did something wrong, there's a big courthouse and three jails to deal with him". The IRA's summary justice was a travesty.

Both were early supporters of "the 'Ra". They participated in the original civil rights marches — including the Bloody Sunday protest in 1972 — because they were disgusted at how the police and Army treated Roman Catholics. But now "it's gone full circle and the IRA are doing everything that the Brits and police were doing, only worse. They have turned into the Mafia," said Mr O'Reilly.

The IRA ruled the estate through fear, the family said. "We haven't had a ceasefire. The only difference is we're not being stopped and having our cars searched by the police and Army, but we're still waiting for the IRA to come to our door. They've called a ceasefire with the Army and the police, but not their own community."

School has 50,000 reasons to cheer

AN INFANTS school in Warwickshire has become the first to collect more than 50,000 tokens in the Free Books For Schools Scheme (writes Hannah Betts). This is enough for at least 500 books.

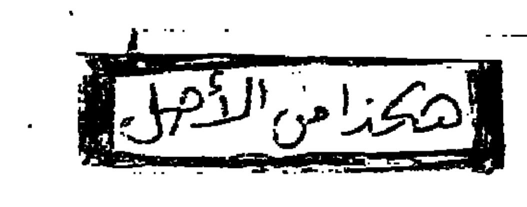


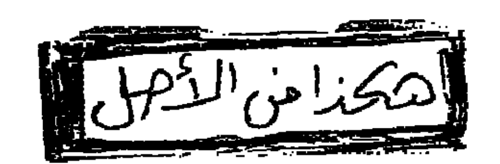
Stockingford Infant School in Nuneaton has enlisted the community in collecting the tokens from *The Times*, other News International newspapers and Walkers snacks. Every lunchtime teams of teachers, parents, grandparents and dinner ladies busy themselves cutting out tokens, which continue to pour in at a rate of 1,000 per day.

Nine local businesses, including newsagents, a petrol station, pubs and post offices, have rallied behind them. Pam Gresty, the head teacher, said: "We are lucky to be part of a supportive community."

What strategy are you using to galvanise collection? Call 0171-895-9018 and tell us about it (office hours only).

Token, page 26





Deal raises hope of EU cash freeze

Ministers agree on first step to reform, but big battles lie ahead, reports Charles Bremner

DESPITE some grumbling, the agreement on a new farm package brought cheer to European capitals yesterday. It shifts the biggest obstacle in the struggle to overhaul the way that the European Union raises and spends money.

"Things are starting to move now — we will find a solution," said Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the French Finance Minister, who is one of the key figures in the effort to wrap up a budget package on March 25 under Germany's EU presidency. The Germans say that they are now more optimistic that, at a summit in Berlin, Chancellor Schröder will manage to broker a deal on Agenda 2000, the most ambitious spending reform attempted by the EU.

Resolving the technical side of a farm package was a vital first step because the common agriculture policy swallows almost half the EU's annual budget of £60 billion. However, strains between a newly assertive Germany and its French partner could halt an early settlement. The wrangle over farm reform produced the sharpest friction for years between the two core states.

To achieve the overall reform target, however, the 15 leaders must agree unanimously on a solution to a mind-boggling equation. The aim, backed by most states, is to freeze overall spending for the next six years, a feat not previously attempted in the EU's history of ever-rising budgets.

At the same time, funds have to be set aside to prepare for the entry of new member states from the east and hardline demands from member states must be accommodated. The main ones are Britain's insistence on retaining its special budget rebate, Germany's demand for a cut in its £8 billion annual contribution, and a refusal from Spain, Ireland and other poorer states to give up their lion's share of regional aid and special subsidies that account for a third of the EU budget.

Old hands from the business of EU financial horse-trading predict that the 15 will muddle through with a tangle of compromises that give just enough to each side to justify a claim to victory. The haggling could fail to produce a solution in Berlin and be carried on to a summit in Cologne in June.

Under fire from its EU partners for shaky management of the presidency so far, Germany is trying to narrow the options for a final compromise. This is likely to include limited sacrifices for the southern states, plus a more modest shift in the German contribution than originally demanded by Herr Schröder. Britain's rebate, worth about £2 billion a year, is almost certain to survive, but with a provision that will not entitle it to money back on its share of the costs of enlarging the EU to Poland, Hungary and other eastern states. Britain's isolation over its rebate was underlined yesterday when the European Parliament voted to end the money-back arrangement negotiated by Mrs Thatcher in 1984.

It is still possible that the farm package could unravel, bringing down the whole spending edifice, over a fight on how to control the overall cost. Germany, Britain and other states wanted a new system to hand part of the farm money back to member states. This would partly answer German demands for a cut in its share of the budget. Paris wants to limit farm spending and the EU budget by phasing out direct subsidies to farmers.

Both items are likely to go back on the table in Berlin. In the meantime, foreign and finance ministers are embarking on a round of negotiations to pave the way to Berlin.

MICHAEL SCOTT

Farmers' optimism grows

THERE was "cautious optimism" at the settlement from one farmer whose family have been raising cattle and growing cereal crops in Northumberland for more than a century (Paul Wilkinson writes).

But Gordon Meek, who owns 400 acres at Ponteland, is now considering diversifying into more profitable areas as his income declines. He has already seen profits drop by about 80 per cent in the past five years.

"It's a lot better than we might have expected," he said. "The reports coming out of Brussels a couple of weeks ago were very discouraging. We must wait for the fine print to emerge over the next couple of weeks, but, on the face of it, the settlement is not too bad."

Subsidies for his 250 beef cattle and 200 acres of winter wheat and barley at Eland Hall Farm will be cut by 20 per cent under the new agreement announced yesterday." We have got to accept that this is the way the future is going and adjust to deal with it," said Mr Meek.

"The beef price has dropped alarmingly over recent years because of the BSE crisis and we shall have to see how much the new figures take this into account. I was also worried about what the cut in the cereal intervention price might be, but it is not as steep as we first thought it was going to be.

"I will now have to sit down and look at alternatives. Organics is one way forward, but that is still a limited market and it requires a lot of investment to get it started."

Topsy-turvy world where spending saves money

The days of lavish subsidies are numbered, reports Charles Bremner

YESTERDAY'S breakthrough in Europe's attempt to get to grips with its runaway farm budget offered a glimpse of the topsy-turvy world of the common agriculture policy: in order to cut the cost of subsidising farmers, European taxpayers will have to spend billions more than at present.

Like everything involving the CAP, the odd arithmetic has a logic of its own, once you factor in the imperatives behind the 37-year-old system that pays farmers to produce food at higher-than-market prices and stops importers undercutting them. Put simply, the farmers have to be paid some £5 billion more in the next six years to wean them off a system that would otherwise drive the European Union into bankruptcy.

The cuts of up to 20 per cent agreed yesterday in the EU's fixed prices for cereals, milk and beef are not spectacular, but they mark acceptance by all governments that the days of lavish subsidies are numbered.

The new deal is not a philosophical watershed, because governments started cutting the fixed-price system in 1992 and substituting direct compensation, along with the notorious system of set-aside land. That so-called McSharry reform sparked riots in France, the towering beneficiary of the CAP, and an explosion in EU paperwork for farmers.

However, the new accord will give producers a hefty shove towards market economics by bringing prices closer to world levels. To the anguish of many smaller farmers already facing severe hardship, cereal producers will receive cheques for about only half their losses, beef farmers will get about 80 per cent and milk farmers will have 60 per cent compensation for the time being.

The immediate spur for the latest reform was not the need, argued by Britain and the Nordic states, to slam the brakes on a cash machine that shovels half the entire EU budget into a sector that employs 5 per cent of workers. As the recipient of £700 million of annual subsidies and a cultural belief in the sanctity of the farmer, France was ready to extend the life of the machine that was devised in a 1950s pact with Germany. This gave the Germans an export market for manufactured goods in return for a guaranteed income for France's huge and then inefficient farm sector.

The main spur for reform this time was twofold. The EU must comply soon with international trading rules that bar subsidies to farmers and exporters and it must also whip itself into shape before the entry, probably within ten years of Poland and four other states from the former Communist bloc. Applying the CAP to Poland, an inefficient agricultural giant where half the workforce is employed in agriculture, and its neighbours, would empty EU coffers.

The European Commission and farm ministers are putting great store by the way the new reform recognises a broader role for government support. Farmers, for example, will be rewarded for environmentally friendly methods.

The reforms are also supposed to curb the scope for fraud. With so much money on offer, farmers have shown great ingenuity, claiming imaginary crops. The drive to combat the fraud has prompted EU inspectors to resort to satellite photography and other high-tech methods to measure true areas under plantation. Farmers are likely to be tempted by shady practices as long as the subsidy system exists, according to Commission officials.

In the meantime, continental EU governments are bracing for another bout of demonstrations by angry farmers.

Leading article, page 23

Anti-euro vote 'no guarantee of victory'

ANTI-SINGLE currency campaigners were warned yesterday that winning a referendum to keep the pound early in the next Parliament would only be the start of their struggle (Roland Watson writes).

Rodney Leach, chairman of Business for Sterling, said: "We would be asked to vote again until we come up with the right answer. It's a battle that would have to be won again and again." Mr Leach was speaking at a head-to-head debate in Westminster with Sir Clive Thompson, the pro-euro CBI president, in the first of many such clashes between opposing sides.

Sir Clive said that business would desert Britain if it remained outside the single currency. He claimed that two thirds of businessmen wanted to see Britain sign up to the euro within the next five years.

Anthony Howard, page 22

Hereditary peers incited to revolt against expulsion

By James Landale
Political Correspondent

HEREDITARY peers have received an extraordinary call to rise up in rebellion against the Bill which would expel them from the House of Lords.

Old-fashioned poster bills have been sent anonymously to all 600-plus hereditary members urging them to block the legislation when it comes before the Lords at Easter. The call to arms has been attacked by Tory and crossbench chiefs and dismissed as the work of a maverick crossbench peer trying to incite revolt.

But the poster provided a clear signal to the Government that some hereditary peers are prepared to go down fighting. And it was an uncomfortable warning to Tory chiefs that some hereditaries are beyond the control of party whips.

The House of Lords Bill, designed to scrap the voting and sitting rights of hereditary peers, will receive its third reading in the Commons next week and its second reading in the Lords on March 29.

TO ALL HEREDITARY PEERS
CALL FOR ACTION
KILL THE BILL

The A3-sized poster says the rights of hereditary peers should not be "lightly surrendered". It also insists that peers should not be bound by the so-called Salisbury Convention under which the Lords agrees not to throw out legislation contained in an incoming Government's manifesto.

It ends: "You must attend the second reading debate and kill the Bill," before adding: "The game's afoot."

If the Bill were to be rejected at second reading — something the Lords never does — it would die immediately. The Government would almost certainly reintroduce it under the Parliament Acts and force it onto the statute book. It is possible that an amendment is tabled at second reading but would almost certainly be defeated.

Lord Strathclyde, the Tory leader in the Lords, said: "This has nothing to do with the Tory party. But it shows the depth of concern felt by some people towards this Government's assault on the constitution and Parliament."

Lord Weatherill, former Commons Speaker and convenor of the crossbenches, said he had investigated rumours that a crossbench peer had been responsible. But all the peers he had spoken to had denied sending the poster.

One peer said: "I think someone was rifling through their drawer and came across some propaganda from the 1911 campaign against reform. He probably just touched it up and gave it a second outing."

A Labour spokesman in the Lords said: "This is another example of a section of hereditary peers who are totally out of touch with the real world."



Buddy politics: Tony Blair and Gordon Brown taking to the airwaves for a phone-in on Talk Radio yesterday

Now for something completely different

By Mark Inglefield, Political Reporter

TONY BLAIR and Gordon Brown launched a new form of "buddy politics" with a joint appearance to defend the Budget on a radio programme. The Prime Minister and his Chancellor had been invited onto Talk Radio to discuss income tax relief and fuel levies, but they could not resist projecting themselves as a pair of back-slapping, regular guys. Dropping his prudent facade, Mr Brown talked about his boss's love of rock and roll. "You can come back and hear the music playing in Downing Street in the afternoon ... and that's before the kids get home," he quipped.

This was the first time that any Chancellor or Prime Minister had appeared on a radio programme together, and was seen as part of Mr Blair's drive to stop the media trivialising politics. It certainly left listeners in no doubt that Mr Brown and Mr Blair were bosom pals. When asked about their friendship, the Prime Minister said it was "the best relationship I know in British politics" — something that might come as a surprise to Westiminster's married couples, among them Peter and Virginia Bottomley.

Mr Blair went on to deny there was a rift between them. "This is a relationship forged in very difficult times, and in Government it will hold."

But this badinage was rudely interrupted by the callers, who were almost entirely critical of the *Budget*. Dave from Birmingham claimed that it had left him feeling as if "Dick Turpin had just ridden through his living room".

When another caller complained about fuel duties, the Chancellor told him: "Why don't you write to me and I'll get this sorted out."

Only at the end did Mr Brown's chumminess waver. Emulating *The Two Ronnies*, Mr Blair signed off with "It's goodbye from me". Mr Brown hesitated. "Er, and I suppose I should say it's goodbye from him."

THE OLD ONES ARE THE BEST

On "living above the shop", Mr Blair conceded: "It is a strange situation to be in, in a way, but once the door of the flat closes you are with your own family ..." Mr Brown interrupted: "Then David Blunkett (Education Secretary) comes round with his compulsory school lessons and Jack Straw comes round with the curfew."

The Prime Minister and Chancellor have used both jokes before. In an April 1997 election broadcast Mr Blair promised his children they would have "lots of homework when David Blunkett gets hold of you". On May 11, 1997, Mr Brown told friends he intended sending the Home Secretary to "come around and impose a curfew" on the Blair children if they made too much noise.

Benn's new Bill finds friends left and right

Peter RIDDELL ON POLITICS

Tony Benn is one of the most infuriating as well as one of the most original politicians of the postwar era. He has been wrong on many central issues of the past generation and, 20 years ago, largely created the myth that Labour members had been betrayed by their leaders which came within a whisker of tearing the party apart.

But he has also been the single greatest influence on constitutional reform up to the election of the Blair Government. Mr Benn is responsible not merely for allowing peers to disclaim their titles but also for the now regular use of referendums. He has also been persistent and clear-sighted in warning about the growth of executive power and defending the rights of the Commons, not least by making speeches as opposed to soundbites. It has often been easy for ministers and media to dismiss his initiatives merely because they come from him as just one of "Tony's eccentricities".

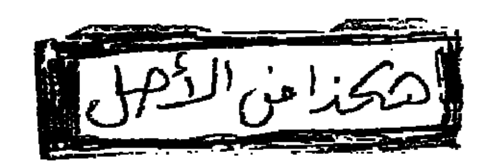
Yet, this month, he has produced a Bill which has gained the support not just of the Labour Left but also of four Tory MPs. This includes not only Richard Shepherd, the Tories' constitutional conscience, but also David Davis, whom no one has ever called a Bennite, and two other select committee chairmen.

The proposal is the grandly titled Crown Prerogatives (Parliamentary Control) Bill, but, in practice, it is mainly about the executive prerogatives exercised by the Prime Minister and other ministers rather than the limited remaining personal prerogatives of the Crown. These executive prerogatives, still misleadingly exercised in the name of the Crown, include declarations of war and the commitment of British troops; signing or ratifying treaties; recognising foreign governments; assenting to European legislation; appointing bishops, judges, peers, ministers, ambassadors and chairs of public bodies, establishing Royal Commissions; the issue of many orders in council; and executive powers not conferred by statute. These powers can, at present, be exercised without the approval of Parliament. But Mr Benn proposes that they should require the assent of the Commons.

This not just a theoretical matter. Several MPs of all parties have recently complained that the Government has not sought recent approval by the Commons for military action over Iraq. Moreover, 18 months ago, the Treasury committee pressed, unsuccessfully, for members of the Monetary Policy Committee of the Bank of England to be confirmed by the Commons. Mr Benn presented the measure as an attempt to redress the balance between the executive and the legislature. As he concedes, the Bill is unpopular with those who exercise patronage since they would have to be more accountable for their decisions.

The Bill also proposes that the appointment of Prime Ministers (technically inviting someone to form an administration) and the dissolution of Parliament before the expiry of the five-year maximum should require the assent of the Commons. This affects the personal prerogatives of the Crown, but that is no reason why they should not be debated and considered, though possibly separately from the strictly executive prerogatives.

Mr Benn's Bill stands no chance of becoming law. But he and his supporters have raised an issue which goes to the heart of complaints of high-handedness by Government. It is now up to MPs themselves to take forward the debate. Perhaps the Public Administration Select Committee should hold an inquiry, to complement its current examination of the accountability of public bodies.





Speedy downfall of 'Red Oskar' is greeted with glee in London

German minister was awkward reminder of Old Labour, Philip Webster writes

THE resignation of Oskar Lafontaine was greeted with scarcely concealed glee by the British Government last night.

Herr Lafontaine — a strong supporter of greater European integration – had become a serious problem for Tony Blair's pro-European Government. He was an uncomfortable reminder to the Prime Minister of the spectre of Old Labour which he had to banish to win his landslide election victory. And the troublesome Finance Minister was a serious obstacle to Gerhard Schröder, the German Chancellor, following the path of economic reform that Mr Blair has been urging on him and the rest of Europe.

Herr Schröder's instincts are in the right place, according to British ministers, but the Third Way was not for "Red Oskar" and had failed to develop in Germany as a result. His federalist ambitions were also an embarrassment to London as it tries to win public opinion over to the euro. The swift rise in the fledgling currency at news of his departure was being noted in London.

He infuriated the Government with his demands last year for European tax harmonisation, leaving Downing Street to fight off a rash of damaging press reports that Britain would be forced to put up taxes to continental levels.

Officially the line from Downing Street was that his departure was a matter for the German Government. Privately, however, senior diplomats are convinced that Herr Schröder deliberately gave Herr Lafontaine enough rope with which to hang himself.

One said: "We have seen this coming. Schröder is a lot shrewder than people give him credit for. In the end German business was giving him the thumbs down and that was enough for Schröder."

Diplomats say that Germany's six-month presidency of the EU has been affected by the turmoil in its Government. There was criticism of the haphazard organisation of last month's special summit in Bonn and there was a big question mark last night over the implications for the crunch two-day meeting of EU leaders on the budget in Berlin at the end of this month.

John Major, the former Prime Minister, said last night: "Lafontaine has been the grit in the German oyster. It seems clear that there has been a serious policy division between him and the German Chancellor.

"I hope his resignation will mean a clear and coherent German economic policy from now on, since this is important not only for Germany, but across Europe."

Tony Benn, the veteran Labour MP and former Cabinet Minister, said: "This is a victory for the deflationary against the reflationary forces in the German Government.

"He is no more dangerous than Keynes. It is because he is so far to the left of every political party in Britain at the moment that he is being presented as a villain."

Gerald Howarth, a Tory MP and prominent Eurosceptic, said: "He has done more than any other elected politician to spell out in words of one syllable what the objectives are of so many continental politicians: namely, the creation of a United States of Europe."

Bonn is plunged into chaos as Lafontaine goes

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

OSKAR LAFONTAINE, the German Finance Minister once dubbed the "most dangerous man in Europe", yesterday lost his long-running power struggle with the Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, and resigned from all his offices.

The Social Democrat-led Government has been thrown into havoc and so too has the European Union. Germany holds the presidency of the EU and the key figure in preparing its financial reforms is Herr Lafontaine.

His plans for a more tightly integrated Europe and for comprehensive tax harmonisation — an initiative which irritated Britain — will not be abandoned, but they will be presented in a less forthright style. Confused Germans were yesterday telephoning each other in search of an explanation, but the deepest shock was probably felt in Paris.

The plump 55-year-old Saarlander, a fluent French-speaker, has kept the Franco-German alliance alive during a dismal and tense period. The much-vaunted Franco-German dialogue has amounted over the past few months to an energetic conversation between Herr Lafontaine and Dominique Strauss-Kahn, the French Finance Minister. Now nobody is talking.

Herr Lafontaine's resignation from the Finance Ministry and from the chairmanship of the Social Democratic Party removes a thorn from the side of the Chancellor. But it also leaves a dangerous void in the Social Democrat-Green coalition — Herr Lafontaine was the Government's ideological backbone, the only minister who stood for anything. Herr Schröder's Government, barely six months after the defeat of Helmut Kohl, has never looked so close to collapse: there can be no more damning statement than the resignation of a Finance Minister.

The *Sun* front page which depressed Lafontaine

It followed a stormy Cabinet meeting on Wednesday. Herr Schröder barked at his ministers and threatened them indirectly with his own resignation. If the Red-Green Government continued to agitate against the interests of business, scaring away investment, he said, "then the point will come when I can no longer take responsibility for such policies".

The words were directed at the Environment Minister, Jürgen Trittin, and at Herr Lafontaine, whose garbled corporate tax reforms have led to protests from the boardrooms of utilities and insurance companies. Herr Lafontaine backed the Chancellor at a Cabinet meeting as if he were not one of the targets.

But late on Wednesday, after a long conversation with his wife, Christa Müller, he decided to step down. There was no way in a Schröder Government that he would be able to realise his dream of a redistributive, demand-led, modern, social democratic economy.

As a Finance Minister, he was under fire from all sides. From the European Central Bank, for urging lower interest rates. From ordinary Germans, who saw no merit in his income-tax reforms. From business bosses, furious at plans to tax reserves or raise corporate taxation. And from the Social Democratic Party itself, which was complaining about his lack of leadership. Advisers were urging him to give up the party chairmanship since its role in day-to-day government was beginning to shrivel. Yet this would have weakened him fatally, making him only one minister among many. He had either to resign both positions or stay in place.

Despite his apparent failures, Herr Lafontaine had time on his side. But both the Chancellor and Herr Lafontaine are vain men. The erstwhile Finance Minister is easily wounded by criticism. Even the *Sun* attack — the "most dangerous man in Europe" — left him hurt and dismayed until M Strauss-Kahn urged him to make a joke out of it.

His options now are unclear. For a few days rumours have been circulating that he will be Germany's candidate for the EU presidency. But it seems improbable that all European leaders would support him in an attempt to succeed Jacques Santer. The lack of prospects leaves him restless, outside government — a loose cannon that could prove lethal for the Chancellor.

Herr Schröder's strategy since winning the general election last September has been to allow Herr Lafontaine to over-extend himself. Gradually the minister has had to retreat from his cherished positions — his wish for target exchange rate zones, for wide-ranging controls of international capital markets, for a ban on overtime. This retreat could be measured. His book, written with his wife, is a personal manifesto. Called *Don't Be Afraid of Globalisation*, they set out their plan for a left-leaning German republic. It has already become plain to Herr Lafontaine that none of these ideas will be realised.

He once had high hopes of becoming the first Social Democratic leader since Helmut Schmidt. But the personal popularity of Herr Schröder kept him in check.


MICHAEL JUNG : EPA

Oskar Lafontaine with his wife, Christa Müller, whom he consulted before quitting. Their dreams of a left-leaning republic have been dashed

Leading article, page 23

Schindler of the art world back in the picture

Susan Bell writes in Paris of new fame for an American who saved 4,000

THE memoirs of Varian Fry, a long-forgotten American wartime hero who rescued some of the greatest cultural figures of the 20th century from the clutches of the Gestapo, were finally published in France yesterday, more than 30 years after he died alone and in obscurity, largely ignored by those he risked his life to save.

Fry, dubbed "the artists' Schindler", was a Harvard-educated young journalist when he left New York for France in 1940 to help European artists and intellectuals to escape Nazi persecution.

Among those he helped to save were Marc Chagall, Max Ernst, Hannah Arendt, Marcel Duchamp and André Breton. In all, Fry rescued more than 4,000 people, including British soldiers trapped in occupied France.

Even before arriving in France, Fry had had firsthand experience of the horrors of Nazism. As a foreign correspondent for an American journal, *The Living Age*, he had witnessed the first Nazi pogrom against the Jews on a trip to Berlin in 1935.

On his return to the United States he became involved with the American Emergency Rescue Committee and jumped at the chance to return to Europe. Armed with a letter of introduction from Eleanor Roosevelt, a list of 200 endangered intellectuals and $3,000 strapped to his leg, Fry headed for Marseilles, the last big French port not under German control, and set up his headquarters in a third-floor room of the Hotel Splendide.

The Marseilles Fry describes in his memoir, *The Black List*, was crammed with refugees who feared that they would be turned over to the Nazis under the "surrender on demand" clause in the Franco-German armistice. Soon the hotel was crowded with desperate refugees who saw the American as their last hope of obtaining exit papers.

Fry quickly became skilled at arranging emergency visas, false passports and forged identity cards and smuggled thousands of people out by boat or across the Spanish border on foot. He lobbied the US Administration, sympathetic consuls and friends in high places, denounced the internment camps and laundered dollars for his cause.

Among his most devoted associates was Mary Jayne Gold, a beautiful Chicago-born heiress who came to Paris in the Thirties "to have a good time". When the Nazis marched down the Champs Elysées in 1940, Gold moved to Marseilles, where she met Fry. She provided much needed financial help and was not averse to using her looks to persuade officials to turn a blind eye to the rescue work.



Marc Chagall and Hannah Arendt: Fry helped both of them to escape from conquered France

Varian Fry in his office in spring, 1941. He died in 1967, almost wholly forgotten, even by those he rescued

Fry was sent to France on a three-week assignment to help 200 refugees to escape, but he held on for 13 months. He might have saved many more than 4,000 if the US State Department, anxious to maintain good relations with Vichy, had not betrayed him, plotting with the French authorities to have him expelled for "protecting Jews and anti-Nazis".

Saddened and embittered, Fry returned to America, where he taught Latin until his death in 1967. He remained obsessed by the Holocaust: "I would like to forget that look (of a woman refugee)," he wrote. "Even if only for five minutes. I deserve that small respite. But I cannot."

His memoirs were published in America in 1945, but quickly went out of print and his courage was forgotten, although France did honour him shortly before he died with the Légion d'honneur.

However, with the republication of his moving memoir, this situation looks set to change. Last year Fry became the first American to be made one of the Righteous Among the Nations by the Israeli Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Museum. And in Marseilles an exhibition dedicated to him opens next week.

Agnelli 'rescues' House of Savoy antiques

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

GIANNI AGNELLI, the 78-year-old patriarch of Fiat whose power and influence have earned him the title "the uncrowned king of Italy", yesterday emerged as a mystery buyer who bid at Sotheby's in London this week for 18th-century antiques which once belonged to Italy's royal family, the House of Savoy.

In an unusual move Sotheby's agreed on Wednesday to a request from the Italian police to freeze the sale of 24 lots for 35 days to allow investigators to establish whether the export licences were in order.

Italian MPs and police yesterday continued to claim that the royal furniture was "of national importance", and that the export licences — which they do not deny are valid — had been obtained by presenting the items in five different provincial fine arts offices of the Ministry of Culture.

"If the items had been viewed in their entirety, Italian officials would have assessed them as a collection and blocked their export," said General Roberto Conforti, head of the carabinieri section dealing with fine arts offences.

La Stampa, the Turin newspaper, said that a number of wealthy Italians had flown to London to attend the sale, which raised more than £8 million, in response to a call by Signor Agnelli for a "patriotic rescue operation".

It emerged that before the sale Signor Agnelli bought four wall-mounted gilded candelabra decorated with Meissen porcelain — which once belonged to King Umberto II, the last Italian monarch — with the aim of donating them to Turin. The city is the seat of the former royal family and the headquarters of Fiat and the Agnelli empire.

The collection was put together by Giuseppe Rossi, who was close to ex-King Umberto, who went into exile in Portugal in 1946. After Signor Rossi's death it passed to his sister, now 80, who plans to fund various charities, including one for young jobless.

Checkmate for German chess king as 'Fritz' leaves cheat exposed

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

THE German chess world is in uproar over a 55-year-old minor league club player whose stunning victories against Russian grandmasters were allegedly the result of an electronic fraud rather than mastery of the game.

Clemens Allwermann is a retired hi-fi salesman who until recently was content to play at his local clubhouse in southern Germany. Suddenly, at a chess tournament in Böblingen, he won mate in eight moves against the Russian grandmaster Sergei Kalinichev, one of the world's top players, and stormed on to win first prize.

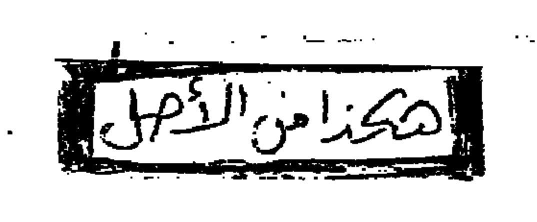
Again and again, the crucial game was replayed by German chess enthusiasts to analyse Herr Allwermann's lucid play. Then somebody noticed the similarity between the moves, and those proposed by the computer chess programme "Fritz 5.32". The game, so to speak, was up.

Herr Allwermann, it appears, used a messager hidden on his lap. The grandmaster would make his move and Herr Allwermann, reaching down apparently to adjust his trousers, would punch it into the device. At the other end of the transmitter was an accomplice in a room in the hotel where the tournament was being staged. The friend typed the moves into Fritz 5.32 and waited for the computer's advice. The counter-moves were then relayed into a miniature ear receiver concealed by Herr Allwermann's long hair.

After his surprising victories he has been so closely watched by spectators that he has lost every game. Electronics shops have confirmed that they sold the apparatus to Herr Allwermann and the German chess and sports authorities are calling for blood. Egon Ditt, president of the German Chess Federation, wants Herr Allwermann to be banned for several years. "This is not just a prank. We have to send a signal to the world that chess tournaments are not going to be distorted in the same way that chemical doping has distorted athletics. This is electronic doping and has to be punished accordingly."

At top levels there have been frequent allegations of cheating. In the heyday of Viktor Korchnoi, Boris Spassky and Bobby Fischer — whose international clashes became part of the great Cold War game — allegations flowed about the use of hypnotists, telepathy and even coded yoghurt pots. But it was only a matter of time before cheating at chess became high-tech.

The big question now is how future fraud can be prevented. Some suggest body searches along the lines of airport security before entering the tournament room.



Zimbabwe jails white doctor over child deaths

FROM JAN RAATH IN HARARE

AN ANAESTHETIST, who has been pilloried by black radicals here as a latter-day version of Josef Mengele, the Auschwitz SS doctor, experimenting on black patients, had his conviction for causing the deaths of two children by negligence confirmed by the Supreme Court yesterday.

Dr Richard McGown, 62, is due to begin serving a six-month jail sentence in Harare central prison tomorrow for the death of a 20-month-old boy in 1988. He also has to pay a £160 fine for the 1990 death of a 10-year-old Kenyan girl.

Mark Stonier, his lawyer, yesterday told prison authorities that he was concerned for Dr McGown's safety in prison. When he was jailed briefly in 1995, he was kept apart from other prisoners.

Dr McGown was "surprisingly together" after the court ruling, Mr Stonier said.

Born in India of Scottish parents, Dr McGown was regarded by colleagues as a skilled anaesthetist and a pioneer in the technique of injecting morphine into the spine, seen as a major advance in reducing post-operative pain.



Dr McGown: accused of experiments on blacks

Kalpesh Nagindas, the boy toddler, had been given a heavy dosage of morphine for a routine circumcision. Dr McGown handed him over to his parents 28 minutes after the operation instead of keeping him in hospital for a period of observation.

Lavender Kaminwa died of respiratory depression that followed a high morphine dosage for an appendectomy. Dr McGown "saw fit to send Lavender to a general ward where only one nurse was on duty, managing ten patients in five different rooms".

The Supreme Court decision closes what is probably the most extraordinary legal proceedings in the country's history, underlining the deep divisions between blacks and whites in Zimbabwe.

A parliamentary report in 1993 stirred up a frenzy of race hatred when it denounced Dr McGown for alleged racist experiments on black women and suggested that he injected black patients with the Aids virus.

The report was discredited, but it did not stop public demonstrations by black militants who threatened to "amputate whites" if Dr McGown was not given a severe prison sentence.

The controversy continued to the end. Two weeks ago the Supreme Court admitted that a draft of the judgment had been stolen from the desk of the appeal judge, Ahmed Ebrahim, and given to journalists on the state-controlled television service.

Last Friday the band of the prison services led a march by black radicals calling for Dr McGown to be hanged and for the sacking of the Chief Justice, Anthony Gubbay. Justice Ministry officials said later the band had been "duped" into leading the demonstration.



MASSIMO SAMBUCETTI . REUTERS

President Khatami of Iran is welcomed at the Vatican yesterday by the Pope at the end of his historic three-day visit to Italy. The trip has symbolised his country's attempt to break out of its "pariah" status 20 years after the Islamic revolution which

Italy hails Iran reformer

brought down the Shah (Richard Owen writes). The President also had talks with Massimo D'Alema, the Italian Prime Minister, who praised "the new openness with which Iran is looking at Europe". The visit — to be followed next month by talks in Paris — was dogged by demonstrations by Iranian dissidents and a controversy over the simultaneous presence on Italian soil of Salman Rushdie, author of *The Satanic Verses*. Mr Rushdie said that, if Iran wanted to "normalise its relations with the world", the best way would be to put a stop to death threats.

British outrage as more 'spies' are expelled by Congo

BY SAM KILEY, AFRICA CORRESPONDENT

FOUR more British soldiers and Foreign Office officials as well as a US State Department employee were yesterday expelled from the Democratic Republic of Congo after being accused of spying and illegally entering an army base carrying "sophisticated photographic equipment".

The move yesterday, a day after a British diplomat was expelled on the same charges, immediately sparked outrage at the Foreign Office, which repeated its denial that the men were involved in spying.

"These people were not spies. Their purpose there was wholly innocent. We would have been guilty of irresponsibility if these plans for a possible evacuation in the event the Congo's war spread to the capital were not put forward," Tony Lloyd, the minister responsible for Africa, said.

The expulsions came as Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, and his French counterpart, Hubert Védrine, started a joint tour of Africa in Ghana.

There have been deep suspicions of the motivations of both countries in backing different sides in the Great Lakes catastrophe which has led to the collapse of the former Zaire into civil war.

The arrests and expulsions of alleged British spies will play into the hands of both French and British officials who suspect one another of plotting in Africa.

But yesterday the two senior foreign officials vowed to bury the rivalries of the past when they went on to visit Ivory Coast.

"Britain and France have not always been the closest of partners in Africa," Mr Cook told a meeting by a lagoon in the former French colony's main city, Abidjan. "We need to be transparent with our friends in Africa."

M Védrine, like Mr Cook, highlighted the history. "That this event takes place in Africa is symbolic," he said, adding that concepts of carving up the world and of zones of special influence had lingered longer in Africa than elsewhere.

"All that is now well and truly finished," he said.

Economic woes drive families to suicide in Japan

More children killed by parents, writes **Robert Whymant** in Tokyo

Multiple suicides, in which children are forced to die with their parents, are rising sharply as Japan's economic crisis grows worse, a study showed yesterday.

Last year 72 children were the victims of family suicides, according to the Child Abuse Prevention Network, a private group based in Aichi, central Japan. This marked a sharp increase over the 46 such deaths in 1997, and 38 the previous year.

Thirty mothers and 20 fathers were involved in last year's spate of *ikka shinju* — family suicides where parents decide it is more humane to take their children with them in death rather than leave them with a stigma of failure.

But if the motive is "honourable", the reality is often grisly. Last September, three children and their mother were burnt to death when the father set fire to the family home. The man, who was rescued against his will, told police he planned to die with his family so they could escape together from his mounting debts.

In another case last October, a woman who could not repay a finance company's consumer loan died with her two childen when she drove her car over a 230ft cliff.

The incidents have become so commonplace that, if reported by the press at all, they command only a few lines on the inside pages. Researchers found that "the increase in family suicides appears to reflect the severe economic situation and the debt trap people find themselves in as a result".

A prolonged slump has driven thousands of companies to the wall and pushed unemployment to a postwar record high. Though Japan has the world's second largest economy, it lacks the social safety net common in Western countries. "People around 50 have given their whole lives to a company and find themselves being edged out as the recession gets worse," Ryu Otomo, a writer, said. "There is a spreading mood of fear."

In a trend that is alarming railway operators, many people are choosing to kill themselves by leaping in front of trains. On Monday, train services in the Tokyo area were thrown into chaos when four men in their fifties chose this method of ending it all.

It was the highest one-day toll in the capital since November 23, when four middle-aged men threw themselves in front of trains on a national holiday. "The situation is becoming very serious," said a spokesman for East Japan Railways Company, which operates some of the busiest lines in the Tokyo area. "There are no effective measures we can take to prevent these suicides."

The company says there were 78 suicides on its Tokyo region lines in the nine months from March to December last year, compared to 77 in the previous 12 months. A surge in recent weeks is likely to lift the total for fiscal 1998, which ends on March 31, closer to 90.

Japanese commuters spend countless hours of their lives on packed trains, umbilical cords between their homes and workplaces. For that reason, Mr Otomo believes, they may see the railway lines as a "familiar and homely place" to die.

US 'sorry for death squads'

President apologises to Guatemala over American backing for murderous juntas, Ian Brodie reports

PRESIDENT Clinton has apologised for a dark and long-buried episode of America's foreign policy: its support for brutal right-wing governments in Guatemala during a 36-year civil war in which 200,000 people died.

Making an admission that many Guatemalans never thought they would hear, Mr Clinton declared: "For the United States, it is important I state clearly that support for military forces and intelligence units which engaged in violence and widespread repression was wrong and the United States must not repeat that mistake."

No President before has so directly admitted the US role in the atrocities. In Washington, newly declassified intelligence documents added vivid details of the massacres, kidnappings, torture and other horrors committed by Guatemalan security forces who were trained and equipped by the CIA and US Army.

A 1962 CIA cable described entire villages being burnt to the ground because the Guatemalan Army believed the Mayan Indian peasants supported left-wing guerrillas. "The army can be expected to give no quarter to combatants and non-combatants alike," the cable said. Another document told how, in the 1980s, Guatemalan military intelligence agents dumped suspected guerrillas, dead or alive, out of aircraft into the sea. "In this way, they have been able to remove the majority of the evidence showing that prisoners were tortured and killed."

In a 1966 memo, a State Department security official said that he had established a "safe house" inside the Guatemalan presidential palace where local security agents could meet their US contacts. The premises became headquarters for officers waging Guatemala's "dirty war".

Mr Clinton spoke to a cross-section of citizens at a "peace round table" in Guatemala City. One woman, Femina López, told him how her husband was kidnapped 17 years ago and to this day she does not know if he is alive or dead. "I am just one example of the thousands of women and children who became victims of the war," she said.

> 'Support for forces engaged in repression was wrong'

Along with his message of contrition, Mr Clinton promised Washington's support for harmony and reconciliation in Guatemala where the war ended in 1996 with United Nations help. He explained how US backing for right-wing governments and covert support for actions against left-wing insurgents throughout Central America — in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua — had created "bitter divisions" within the United States. All the countries are now under democratic rule. For many years US administrations, Democratic and Republican, intervened at will in the region, a habit reinforced during the Cold War by the threat of communism.

In Guatemala in 1954, during the Eisenhower Administration, CIA support enabled a military junta to overthrow the left-wing regime.

From then on, the Americans sided with a military that became synonymous with repression and abuse. Last month a report from the Historical Clarification Commission, which grew out of the UN's role, found that the CIA and US Army advisers were pivotal to the state-sponsored acts of genocide committed by the Guatemalan Army, mainly against the Mayans.

The report blamed the army for 93 per cent of all massacres, tortures, disappearances and killings during the war. Left-wing guerrillas were responsible for only 3 per cent of atrocities, the report said.

During an arrival ceremony at the palace, Mr Clinton praised Guatemala's efforts to move towards democracy and reconciliation and reaffirmed America's commitment to shed light on the dark events of the past so that they are never repeated.

His words were welcomed by government and opposition politicians, but they were not enough for some. Facing a line of riot police and troops with assault rifles outside the palace, several hundred students, trade unionists and other demonstrators burnt US flags and chanted: "Yankee, go home."


LINKS
http://www.derechos.org/guatemala.eng.html — Guatemalan Human Rights
http://www.lapaz.com.gt/anex4.htm — Historical Clarification Commission Agreement



A protester holds the picture of a "disappeared" woman in Guatemala City yesterday

Reagan launched crusade to drive out communists

Washington gave dictators arms to block 'domino effect', writes David Adams

WHEN President Reagan took office in January 1980, critics say US policy in Central America went haywire. Reversing several years of promoting peaceful reform, Ronald Reagan's Administration launched an ideologically driven crusade of anti-communist conflict that cost hundreds of thousands of lives and left the region economically devastated.

For most of this century the United States has aggressively protected its interests in Central America, viewed in Washington as its own backyard. In a region where democracy had not taken root, that usually meant backing dictators.

But US policy shifted dramatically with the fall of Anastasio Somoza, the Nicaraguan dictator. The ousting of Somoza by the Sandinista revolutionary army rocked the region and plunged Central America into the Cold War. Fears of a communist takeover prompted Mr Reagan to order the swift increase of military aid to the region, to counter Cuban and Soviet influence.

But defending the region from the so-called "domino effect" of communist expansion meant arming right-wing military regimes in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. Tragically, Washington failed to foresee — or was willing to turn a blind eye to — the horror that would ensue.

Over the next decade the US pumped an estimated $8 billion (£5 billion) to $10 billion into the region, much of it spent on military equipment and training. In El Salvador alone, the US spent $1 million a day for most of the decade.

US aid only strengthened the hand of right-wing military leaders in the region, who engaged in a violent campaign to wipe out left-wing activists. The worst atrocities were in El Salvador and Guatemala where an estimated 300,000 people were killed and millions uprooted.

Meanwhile, the US was secretly arming and training the Contras, a Nicaraguan resistance army fighting to overthrow the Sandinistas.

Allegations that US officials covered up human rights abuses by their allies in the region have gained credence over the years as damaging documents have been unclassified. In some cases evidence has emerged of involvement by US troops, and more particularly the CIA, in abuses.

Political decisions were made in Washington to hide the truth from an American public with little stomach for war after Vietnam. In Honduras, for example, US officials hushed up information about the murder of left-wing activists by the military. A recent article by the former US Ambassador to Honduras, Jack Binns, describes how he was instructed to "discontinue reporting human rights violations in official channels".

Mr Binns and other academic experts now maintain that the Central American wars were not simply brutal, they were unnecessary. He believes diplomacy, not US support for armed conflict, could have brought peace more quickly to the region.

WORLD IN BRIEF

Anger at Russian censorship move

Moscow: A censorship Bill aimed at stemming the tide of violence and pornography that has saturated Russian television channels in recent years is itself causing outrage (Anna Blundy writes). The Russian press has reacted furiously to the proposed censorship by the Communist-dominated lower house, the State Duma. *Komsomolskaya Pravda*'s front page yesterday was devoted to a raunchily illustrated accusation that Communists are out to deprive the viewing public of Western erotica. President Yeltsin has promised to veto the Bill when it comes to him for signature. The Bill comes at a time when the stability of the Government depends on Communist support and the Communist Party is eager to flaunt its increasing influence.

Three die in avalanche

Rome: A German mother, 58, her daughter, 28, and a German man, 61, were killed in Italy's Alto Adige region when they were engulfed by an avalanche that they set off themselves after venturing off piste (John Phillips writes). Police said their bodies were pushed some 9,000ft down the mountain by the wall of snow. The accident underlined official warnings that warmer temperatures after heavy snowfalls are making snow conditions treacherously unstable again in the Alps and Apennines.

Italy reviews bases

Rome: America and Italy are to set up a joint commission to review the rules governing US bases on Italian soil, following the tragedy a year ago in northern Italy when a low-flying jet on a Nato training flight from Aviano severed a cable-car wire, sending 20 people plunging to their deaths (Richard Owen writes). The move follows a wave of anger in Italy over last week's acquittal by a US military court of the pilot.

Israel convicts ex-spy

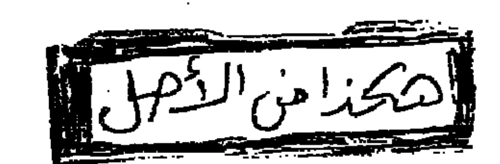
Tel Aviv: A court convicted yesterday a retired Mossad agent of fabricating intelligence that reportedly could have led to war with Syria almost two years ago. Details were not disclosed by the court but according to Israeli reports Yehuda Gil, 64, told his superiors that President Assad of Syria was planning a military strike to seize part of the Golan Heights captured by Israel in 1967. Gil, to be sentenced later, faces up to 15 years in jail. *(AP)*

Hong Kong critics fail

Hong Kong: A no-confidence motion against Elsie Leung, Justice Secretary, over her handling of issues linked to China, was rejected by the territory's legislature sparking new criticism from pro-democracy lawmakers. The challenge followed a decision last year not to prosecute Sally Aw, a pro-China publishing tycoon, in an alleged circulation fraud involving *The Hong Kong Standard* newspaper. *(Reuters)*

Church gunmen kills 4

Gonzales, Louisiana: A gunman burst into a church service and opened fire as he walked down the aisle, killing his wife, child and a member of the congregation and injuring four others, two critically. Shon Miller also fatally shot his mother-in-law at home before going to the New St John Fellowship Baptist Church, police chief Bill Landry said. The gunman fled but was wounded and caught in a shoot-out with police. *(AP)*







Galleria girls: *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*

Paradise lost for shop-worn Valley Girls of LA

FROM GILES WHITTELL IN LOS ANGELES

THEY, like, hung out. They talked in a strange and almost verbless vernacular. But most of all they shopped, turning conspicuous consumption into both an art form and their version of rebellion. They were the Valley Girls, and now they have nowhere to go (like, totally).

With the closure this month of a giant shopping mall at the junction of two freeways in the San Fernando Valley, the curtain will fall on a none-too-glorious era in the social history of Los Angeles: one that celebrated shoes, malls, make-up and dating to the exclusion of the wider world and, some say, reached its apotheosis in Monica Lewinsky.

Ground zero for the Valley Girls was the 900,000 sq ft Sherman Oaks Galleria, a monstrous mall made famous by Frank Zappa and his daughter, Moon Unit. As their 1982 hit single, *Valley Girls*, proclaimed: "Like, ohmigod! Like totally! Girls like the Galleria. And, like, all these, like, really great shoe stores."

In the same year, Amy Heckerling directed what became the seminal cinematic study of Valley Girls, *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*. Shot largely in the Galleria, it featured a young Sean Penn as an urban surf-dude bringing his vacuous beach drawl and surging libido into the mall-bound lives of two quintessential teenage airheads played by Jennifer Jason Leigh and Phoebe Cates.

Now the Galleria is all but dead. Closed for repairs by the 1994 Northridge earthquake, it never truly recovered. Those shops still open around its cavernous four-level atrium are holding frantic liquidation sales and developers are planning to reopen it in two years, mainly as an office complex. An eyesore by any standards, the Galleria has few mourners.

The typical former Valley Girl is loath to own up to her misspent teen years in its bowels, when she and her parents' credit cards were symbols of the fragility of Reaganomics. As Kevin Starr, a prominent local historian, put it: "Right now, the Valley Girl is 35 and about to be a partner in a downtown law firm."

Promoters of Los Angeles have moved on, to the gleaming new Getty Centre, a crucible of high culture not five miles away, next to the same freeway but facing south towards the Pacific and the booming west side. The Galleria, by contrast, stands in near-permanent smog in a neighbourhood best known for churning out soft-core pornography.

Pop culture has moved on, too. First, Aaron Spelling trained teenagers' gaze on Beverly Hills 90210, the most self-consciously sophisticated zipcode in the metropolis. Then Ms Lewinsky showed the world that as an alumnus of Beverly Hills High School she was not an airhead after all. At least, she tried to.

Clinton marriage 'under new strain'

Damian Whitworth in Washington hears reports of shouting matches and humiliation for Hillary

WITH Monica Lewinsky refusing to leave the headlines and accusations about past infidelities continuing to surface, President Clinton's marriage was reported yesterday to be under renewed strain.

Mrs Clinton was quoted as saying: "I don't want to be in the same room as him, let alone the same bed." This was said to be the real reason why she had not joined her husband on his tour of Central America — not a bad back, as her office had explained.

Fox News, the American cable news channel, said its source was close to the Clintons and added that the chilly relations had also been the reason why the couple cut short a skiing trip to Utah earlier this month.

The couple stayed at the home of the film mogul Jerry Katzenberg with their daughter Chelsea, to celebrate her 19th birthday. But when she returned to Stanford University they decided to fly back to Washington rather than stay a planned extra day, moving so swiftly that a plane was not available to transport the travelling press contingent.

Mr Clinton said he wanted to go home early "so we can get a better night's sleep", and this was the line repeated by his spokesman, who said they had busy schedules.

But Marsha Berry, Mrs Clinton's spokeswoman, said that Mrs Clinton's back was to blame.

Rita Cosby, of Fox News said: "The First Couple had a shouting match, which left Hillary Clinton storming out of the room saying she wanted her bags."

The holiday came only days after a television interview with Juanita Broaddrick, an Arkansas woman who claimed tearfully that she was raped by Mr Clinton when he was attorney-general of the state 20 years ago.

Ms Cosby added: "A Clinton family friend [says] that the First Couple barely speak in private, that 'they have nothing to talk about any more. The only thing they have in common is Chelsea'."

Mrs Clinton, who went to New York within 48 hours of the skiing trip, has had back problems since last spring. Ms Berry said it was not appropriate to discuss the Clintons' sleeping arrangements.

A report by Matt Drudge, the Internet gossip columnist, claimed the couple were experimenting with a "trial separation", which involved giving each other as much room as possible.

He quoted a "Hillary supporter" in the White House as saying that the Broaddrick story had led to the new deterioration in relations.

"She was humiliated. He can't keep doing this to her. He promised her over and over again that this rape story was not going to amount to anything. It has caused a serious breakdown," the source said.

Drudge also wrote that a Secret Service agent who gave evidence about the Lewinsky affair before the grand jury, was considering leaving his job because of the hostility between the Clintons. "They may look like they are together, like a couple. They are not. It is all played for the cameras," said the agent.

A former Clinton adviser, who was said by Drudge still to be close to the couple, was quoted as saying: "This is more than a fight, but they have gone through a separation like this before. They always come back to each other . . . however, this time it looks damn serious."

JOYCE NALTCHAYAN AFP



Showing the strain: President Clinton and Hillary, forced together at a recent dinner

Whitewater figure back in court

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

ONE woman's stubbornness has prevented prosecutors finding out if President Clinton lied under oath about his business dealings, a jury was told in Little Rock, Arkansas.

The claim was made at the opening of the third trial in three years for Susan McDougal, 44, a pivotal but until now largely silent figure in the original Whitewater fiasco.

This time, the jury must decide if she is shielding the President or if Kenneth Starr, the independent prosecutor, tried to bully her into giving false evidence against Bill and Hillary Clinton.

McDougal has already spent 18 months in prison for civil contempt of court for refusing to answer questions before Mr Starr's Whitewater Grand Jury in Little Rock. Now she has been charged with criminal contempt and obstruction of justice for the same alleged offence.



McDougal: still silent

Family funeral for a folk hero

BY GILES WHITTELL

JOE DiMAGGIO, revered as an icon of baseball but also of the art of being a celebrity, was buried yesterday in San Francisco, near his home town of Martinez. His estranged son was among the pallbearers at a funeral attended only by family members.

President Clinton, Tom Hanks and Jack Nicholson were reportedly among those who asked to attend but were turned down in accordance with DiMaggio's instructions. "Joe insisted that his funeral be a private religious service," his lawyer, Morris Engelberg, said before the event.

About 40 close friends and family members filed into the Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church in the city's Italian North Beach district, where DiMaggio grew up and married his first wife, Dorothy Arnold, in 1939. His coffin was decorated with white orchids matching lavish floral arrangements throughout the building, a spokeswoman said.

Though he was married briefly to Marilyn Monroe, DiMaggio loathed Hollywood's personality cults and never publicly discussed his marriage after their divorce in 1954.

He had not seen his only child, Joe Jr., for two years, but left him a trust fund in his will to yield $20,000 (£12,000) a year for life. The younger DiMaggio, who lives in a trailer and works in a junkyard, carried the coffin from the church with three relatives.

Holding on to your Inner Babe

CUTTING EDGE

JANE SHILLING

When I was a little girl Mother's Day meant joining a queue of sticky-fingered children at the altar of our local church to be given, by the priest, a posy of primroses and early catkins so fragile that even though the stems were wrapped in damp moss, the flowers had usually started to wilt before we could hand them over to our mothers.

A generation later the modern mother is unlikely to be impressed by the rustic simplicity of wild flowers and wet moss — at least if the big stores' publicity is to be believed.

There is a peculiar air of menace — militancy even — about the build-up to March 14. "Do not forget this date. It's Mother's Day and it's payback time," says my copy of Selfridges' *Yellow* magazine. "Make her day", urged the posters in Marks & Spencer. Blimey. It makes you wonder what kind of mothers their copywriters can have had. It is possible that Germaine Greer — who goes to some length in her new book to remind us that, the advances of feminism notwithstanding, mothers remain slighted, exploited, insulted and undervalued — might find some attraction in this portrayal of menacing motherhood. But for some reason I find myself irritated by it both as a daughter and a mother. I don't care for notions of coercion and obligation where these relationships are concerned. If my son buys me a present for Mother's Day I would like it to be because he felt like it, not because he was nagged into it by retailers.

Suppose that I have been a good enough mother for my son to feel that I deserve a reward. What sort of thing might he buy me? There is a delicate psychology here, well worth mastering if you are a child. You may think that most of the time your mother is a harridan whose conversation consists of the randomly repeated phrases "pick that up", "have you finished your homework?" and "what time do you call this?". You may be surprised to learn that she would not disagree. But she blames it on you. Before you came along she was a babe with a rock-hard stomach and a string of admirers, none of whom ever heard her scream "get your feet off that sofa or I will kill you".

If you are clever you will buy her some little object which subtly suggests that her Inner Babe has not altogether vanished. The results — in terms of amnesia about the nine o'clock telly watershed, a temporary amnesty in her patrols of your sex life and so on — may be well worthwhile.

So, where to begin? Flowers and chocolates are best avoided. Unless they are exquisite (and therefore very expensive) or home-produced, they reek of duty unwillingly done. But for a maximum budget of £20 you can buy the Old Thing real jewels. At Marks & Spencer an elegant necklace of black freshwater pearls on a silvery chain looks far more expensive than its price of £12.

Oasis has a range of sterling silver jewellery beautifully packaged in pale turquoise boxes. A silver sphere on a foxtail chain is £9.99. Black freshwater pearl drops on silver hoops are £6.99. A pair of tiny turquoise studs costs £4.99 and a mother-of-pearl inlaid dog tag on a chain is £14.99.

The Victorians, with their fondness for sentimental puns, would have thought Oasis's luscious purple-velvet pansy *(Pensée)* hair-clips, £4.99, a perfect Mother's Day present (a matching hairband is £3.99).

L'Occitane, too, is good on luxury at pocket-money prices. Generous cubes of appropriately named *Bonne Mère* soap scented with lavender, verbena or wild rose are £2.45, small, £3.95 large. Eaux de Toilette in scents redolent of rural France — jasmine, honeysuckle, rosewood, vanilla — are £8.50 for an old-fashioned, gold-topped bottle, or £16.95 for a large atomiser. Tiny bottles of flower essences or handbag-sized tins of solid perfume are £4.95. L'Occitane giftwraps beautifully at no extra cost.

Muji is another pocket money treasure trove. A silver mesh pencil or make-up case is £2.95. Good-sized silver mesh vanity cases are £5.50 small, £6.50 large. A brushed-aluminium handbag mirror is £3.50 and matching atomiser £5.95. Pure silk body sponges and wash cloths are £4.95. And the most kitchen-shy of mothers would be pleased with Muji's elegant red lacquer chopsticks from £2.95 a pair, or the fragile-looking thrush-egg blue porcelain bowls and dishes, from £2.25.

Buying make-up for other people is an enterprise full of pitfalls. But Warehouse has smart, clear-plastic pouches with four little bottles of nail varnish, or three lipsticks and a lip gloss, in subtle, pinkish colours, that would flatter any skin tone for £10 each.

Children with an affection for Pooh Bear may be captivated by La Senza's silk camisole and knicker sets, £20, in a heavenly hyacinth blue, printed with Pooh holding a bunch of flowers in his paw. In general I share Dorothy Parker's nauseated reaction to Winnie the Pooh and his chums, but for some reason I found these garments adorable.

If you are not sure of your mother's reaction to this sort of camp whimsy, you would be on safer ground at Accessorize with a sapphire or cyclamen sari bag embroidered with gold thread and mirror fragments from £9.99; an intricate "pearl" choker, from £5.99; a pale blue beaded change purse, £6.99; or a matching pale blue glass bead necklace, £3.99, and bracelet, £2.99. And if all this still seems too girly, the sophisticated child might try his mother with a handbag-sized, ring-binder notebook covered in an amazing material that reflects a riot of pink roses and jasmine from one angle, flipping to an ethereal blue background scattered with multicoloured butterflies. At £9.99 it may be a long way from primroses and damp moss, but it's not quite the raw cynicism of "payback time" either.



TONY STONE IMAGES

"If you are clever you will buy her some little object for Mother's Day which subtly suggests that her Inner Babe has not altogether vanished"

SIX OF THE BEST



COMPILED BY DEBORAH BRETT

The drawstring trousers on last week's Style page are by Betty Jackson. They are available from her shop at 311 Brompton Road, London, SW3 (0171-589 7884).

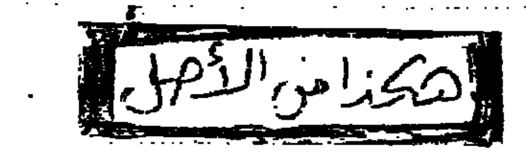
HOT TIP

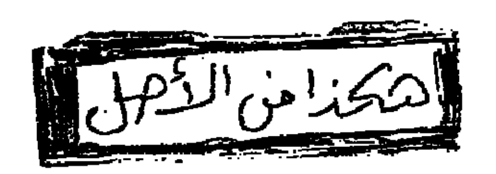
The idea of putting caviare on your face may sound strange but bear with us. Ingrid Millet's Perle De Caviar is an intensive serum, or moisturiser, that contains 42 per cent caviare (most creams contain 3-7 per cent). Four ampules cost £39: use one a month. From beauty salons nationwide and mail order (0171-431 1033).

Objects of desire

■ Agatha, usually known for brassy costume jewellery, has a range of delicate faux antique earrings. From £26 at Agatha, 4 South Molton Street, London, W1 (0171-495 2779).

■ This linen bangle bag dangles elegantly from the wrist. £35 from Whistles, 12-14 St Christopher's Place, W1 (0171-487 4484).

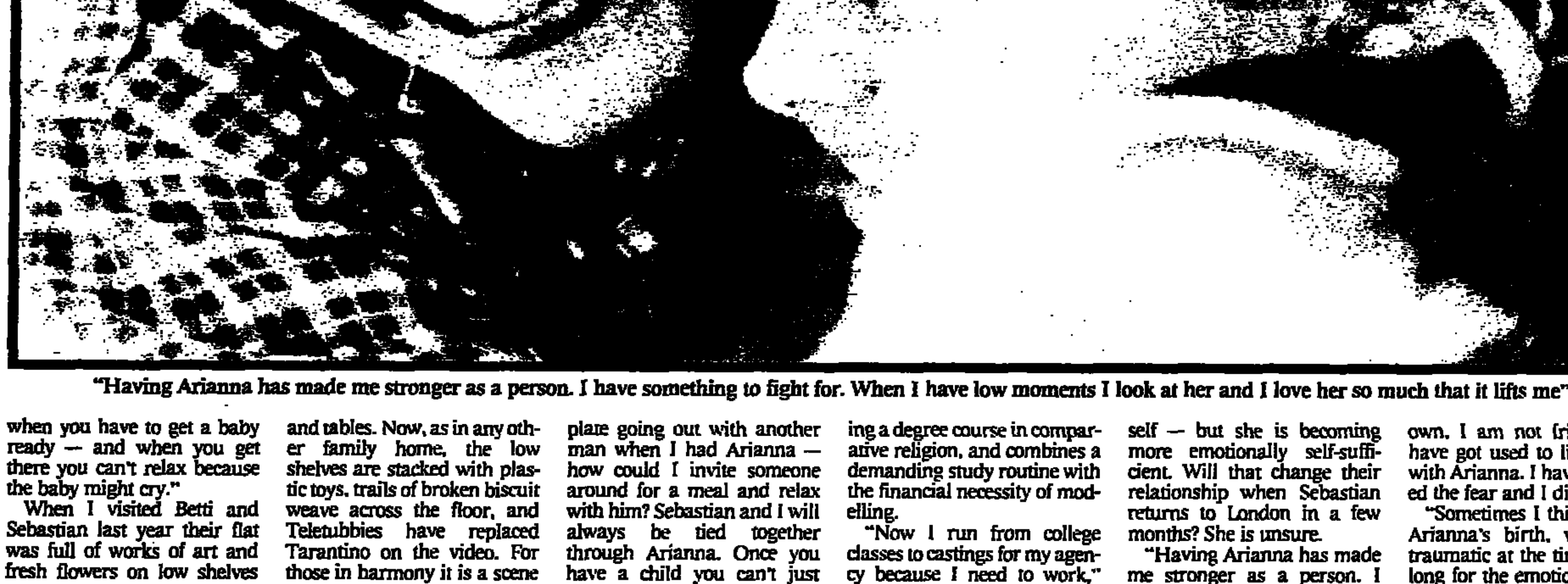




Want a baby? Read this first

Model Betti Romani had romantic hopes of life after a baby. Just 19 months later, she and her partner are living apart. **Sally Morris** reports

CHRIS HARRIS



"Having Arianna has made me stronger as a person. I have something to fight for. When I have low moments I look at her and I love her so much that it lifts me"

A year ago Betti Romani, a striking Italian model, and her partner Sebastian Vince took part in a BBC documentary about first-time parents, in which their expectations of parenthood were contrasted with the reality of life in the first months after the birth of their daughter, Arianna.

It was a salutary but sometimes funny story and, for those viewers with children, a reassuringly familiar one.

A year later, however, things have changed dramatically. Betti and Sebastian split up last September, a week before Arianna's first birthday. They got back together in November but are still living apart.

Betti, 27, lives with 19-month-old Arianna in the couple's one-bedroom North London flat while Sebastian lives in the West Midlands, running a specialist bread business. He sees them at weekends.

> 'Having Arianna showed up the cracks already there'

Betti is a different woman from the confused new mother I interviewed last year. Although she still lacks self-confidence, she also displays a new-found strength. In a follow-up documentary to be shown this Sunday, she admits that her romantic notion of motherhood and family life has been destroyed.

"I had no idea how much strain having a baby can put on your relationship," she says. "Having Arianna showed up the cracks already there. I thought we would both put in the effort to change. Now I am more cynical."

Although Sebastian's reason for leaving his job as a copywriter and setting up his bread business in the West Midlands was purely a business one, the distance between them did not help.

"I would travel up to visit him on the train with Arianna but he was tired and wanted to relax, and I was frustrated because I wanted us to do things as a family. Sebastian is very good with Arianna and loves her, but as a mother I think that you accept responsibility for your child and the sacrifices you have to make more quickly than men do. They want to hold on to their old life. Of course I would like to go out and have a good time, but I don't want to come home to a babysitter when I've been drinking. It's wrong."

As a childless couple, Betti and Sebastian mixed with models and advertising executives. Staying out late was the norm. Yet after Arianna's arrival their lives became polarised: Betti at home, Sebastian at work. She resented him continuing his social life; he resented the pressure on him.

"For the partner out at work, daytime life continues pretty much as before," says Betti. "It's the romance at home that goes. I did try to look good and to be warm for Sebastian — sex is very important to me mentally as well as physically — but you cannot forget that there is always a baby around. Arianna is still awake and playing in the evenings.

"Suddenly we just weren't kissing each other any more. When Sebastian came home from work late because he had been out with his friends, I would be upset and criticise him. Then he would feel even less like coming home early the next night.

"When you are home alone with a baby, you don't feel you can compete with friends who are free to stay out when they like, and you feel you are being shut out. If you are insecure, this makes you worse.

"Even my close girlfriends who don't have children ring up to suggest that we go out, and say 'I'll see you in half an hour,' without realising how long it takes to get anywhere when you have to get a baby ready — and when you get there you can't relax because the baby might cry."

When I visited Betti and Sebastian last year their flat was full of works of art and fresh flowers on low shelves and tables. Now, as in any other family home, the low shelves are stacked with plastic toys, trails of broken biscuit weave across the floor, and Teletubbies have replaced Tarantino on the video. For those in harmony it is a scene symbolic of family bonding. For those with problems it is another example of how your life is no longer your own.



A year ago: how we reported Betti's parenthood experiences

The split with Sebastian was sudden, shocking and painful, says Betti.

"I was very hurt and you feel especially vulnerable when you have a small child," she says. "I was frightened by the idea of being a single mother — not because I thought that I couldn't rebuild my life, or that I'd never find another man, but because I felt sad that we had split up without considering the consequences properly. I couldn't contemplate going out with another man when I had Arianna — how could I invite someone around for a meal and relax with him? Sebastian and I will always be tied together through Arianna. Once you have a child you can't just move on."

What Betti has experienced, as a result, is a fierce fight for survival that overrides any self-pity. A year ago she could not contemplate returning to work and was doubtful about finding any form of childcare for Arianna. Now she is taking a degree course in comparative religion, and combines a demanding study routine with the financial necessity of modelling.

"Now I run from college classes to castings for my agency because I need to work," she says. "Sebastian has always helped with money so I could afford childcare, but I need to earn my own money.

"I have a childminder three days a week but the rest of the time Arianna is with me. I study late at night."

Betti has no time left for herself — but she is becoming more emotionally self-sufficient. Will that change their relationship when Sebastian returns to London in a few months? She is unsure.

"Having Arianna has made me stronger as a person. I have something to fight for. When I have low moments, I look at her and I love her so much that it lifts me. Getting back together is a gradual thing. I am looking forward to trying to make it work because I still love him — but having been through this time on my own, I am not frightened. I have got used to living alone with Arianna. I have confronted the fear and I didn't die.

"Sometimes I think back to Arianna's birth, which was traumatic at the time — but I long for the emotional feeling of giving birth to a child again.

"It would be nice to have another baby one day, although it would be playing with fire to think about it now. But yes, I'd do it all again."

● Teething Problems, *BBC2, Sunday, 10pm.*

Always judge a cookbook by its novel ingredients

MAN UNDERNEATH

JOE JOSEPH

Even weekend cooks, after flicking through a recipe book or two, can feel bold enough to experiment with ingredients themselves.

And, if the mood grabs you, there's nothing to stop you visiting these people in hospital as they recuperate from their hunch that oysters and meringues would make a novel marriage: in fact it proved *so* novel that even Mickey Rooney and Zsa Zsa Gabor, who have shown time and again over the years that they will wed almost anything, would think twice before marrying these two items.

As a result of this difficulty in dreaming up fresh combinations of ingredients, you find that people who sit down to write a recipe book often end up not writing many of these recipes themselves. They just fill the pages with other people's recipes.

They can do this because recipes seem to exist in a copyright limbo whereby you can fatten up a book with other chefs' recipes, as in: "I always eat this dish at Harry's Bar when I'm in Venice, where Arrigo created the following wonderful recipe..."

This is why the only people still inventing recipes are manufacturers of tinned foods. They think you're more likely to buy their tins if they print a handy recipe on the back of the can. This combines their product range in hitherto unimagined "serving suggestions", such as "tomato soup with cling peaches, anchovies and sweetcorn niblets — an easily prepared meal that can be enjoyed by all the family, providing their senses have been dulled by long addiction to recreational drugs".

Writers, of course, are shy about plagiarising other people's recipes, believing that exercising their own imagination is how they earn their crust. Hence in *The Hemingway Cookbook*, which is being published to celebrate Hemingway's centenary, Ernest shares his personal he-man recipes for fillet of lion ("First obtain your lion. Skin him and remove the two strips of tenderloin from either side of the backbone. These should hang overnight in a tree out of reach of hyenas"), and for bear steaks (which Papa liked to eat on sourdough pancakes spread with marmalade).

But Hemingway is far from being the only great writer to have squandered Sunday afternoons in the kitchen, juggling hot saucepans to invent dishes that reflect his literary personality.

Take Harold Pinter. He has published a collection of recipes that are cooked wherever the literary intelligentsia meet to eat. The star is Harold's famous bolognese sauce: "Get some beef. Some pork, too. Mince them. Fine. Not too fine. You follow? Not too frigging fine. What good would that do? It would do no good at all. Too fine, that would get us nowhere. Fry the meat. Then pause. You fried the onions? No? I didn't think I'd need to mention the frying of the onions. I thought, everyone knows about the frying of the frigging onions. Hey Frank, you know about the onions? *[Frank nods.]* See, even Frank knows. But you, you're a non-starter.

"Why am I wasting my time teaching you anything? Briggs just won't believe it when he finds out. I can only assume that you are a poof! Is that what you are? A poof are you? You make me sick." *[Harold stomps out of the room and someone telephones for a curry.]*

And here is Woodrow Wyatt's pet recipe for pancakes: "Get some plain flour. Before measuring 8oz into a mixing bowl, call Margaret and tell her how impressive she looked on *News at Ten* last night. On your way back to the kitchen, open the front door to a minion from Clarence House delivering a lunch invitation from the Queen Mother.

"As you scribble a reply, find yourself interrupted by a call from Henry [Kissinger] seeking advice on the best way to handle Kosovo. Tell him it's best served chilled, with blinis. Fetch eggs, milk and sugar, and tell cook to do the rest since you'll be too busy helping Tony and Gordon to run the country."

Noel Coward — who liked his pancakes "very, very flat, like Norfolk" — published *The Noel Coward Singing Cookbook* to cheer everyone up after the war. It was here that Coward first unveiled his famous "Duck Casserole With Sage" (*"Don't be too stingy with the sage, Mrs Worthington / Don't be too stingy with the sage / First you get a petite duckling; the best ones are from Brest / And the width of the pot, matters a lot, for your dish to be a success / Remove the guts, Mrs Worthington / Don't add nuts, Mrs Worthington / For cooking times, please turn the page!"*).

Many scholars now believe that it was a passion for cooking that cheered up Dorothy Parker in her darker moments. It appears that *Resumé*, her famous poem on life and suicide (*"Razors pain you; rivers are damp ..."*), began life as the introduction to *Parker's Party Food* (*"Kidney tastes vicious; I don't like clams / Lamb's delicious; but not with jams / Soak summer berries, in Earl Grey tea / Pour in some sherry; Bon appetit!"*).

Of course, it doesn't always run as smoothly as hollandaise. For instance, *Stephen King's Favourite Recipes* (*"Gigot d'agneau: buy a lamb from a nearby farm. Slaughter the lamb by chasing it around the house with a large chainsaw, to the accompaniment of loud, jangly music..."*) had to be withdrawn from bookshops after being panned: not by literary critics, but by the US Food and Drug Administration.

King says the whole sorry episode still leaves a nasty taste in his mouth.

Playgrounds for political correctness

Race zealots threaten our children, says George Bridges

The dock is already crammed full of Britain's police. Now it is to be stuffed with teachers. According to Ofsted, the school inspectorate, teachers in "many schools" are guilty of institutional racism.

Bunkum. Ofsted's kangaroo court is guilty of a miscarriage of justice, the consequences of which could be more heinous than the supposed crime itself.

Britain's education system is guilty of institutional incompetence, not racism. More than in one in five adults, whatever their colour, can barely read a bus timetable. Instead of addressing this failure, we have become distracted by those who argue that just because a child is from a particular ethnic group, he or she is more likely to join that one fifth of the adult population. Such claims, based on a premise that colour and ability are linked, smack of racism themselves. They also ignore the facts. The performance of Indian, Chinese and other Asian pupils continues to outstrip those of white children.

So why the fuss? Those who have driven the debate do not want primarily to equip children for the world, but to change the world. The classroom, like the police canteen, has become a focus for political struggle rather than better standards.

For the ideologues education, as the American academic Paul Gottfried observed, is now about "changing social structures and attitudes". Sailing under the flag of racial equality, with the favourable wind of the Macpherson inquiry behind it, an armada of political ideologues is approaching Britain's schools.

You don't need to look in the crystal ball, just read their books. On the shelves of the Institute of Education, the academy of teaching practice, can be found one particularly revealing title, *Education towards Race Equality*.

Its author argues that if racism is seen as a set of prejudices held by a minority, this "denies the structural aspects of racism in the education system *and in society*". As a result, education needs to be "not merely reformed, but transformed". Quoting a colleague's work, teachers are told: "Education will have to be *reconceptualised* in the context of the culture and the social formation in which it takes place . . . People must use new ideas to change the mental outlook of the whole of society". Welcome to PC world.

The logical consequence of reform is a change to the whole national curriculum. Just such a demand was made by the authors of the Macpherson report. And it was not issued in a vacuum.

A programme for reform already exists in *Ethnic Relations and Schooling*. This includes the claim that the curriculum is guilty of reflecting "the ethos and culture of the white middle-class Anglo-Saxon. It excludes the significant input from so-called Third World countries". Worse, the curriculum has been "increasingly directed towards the achievement of ideological ends".

If you're worried about the curriculum being bent for "ideological ends", you might well ask what it should be doing changing "the mental outlook of the whole of society". But those using race to transform our classrooms have a suitably revolutionary approach to English language. The PC grammar runs thus: I am motivated by compassion, *you are motivated by politics*, and the curriculum is riddled with ideology.

So *everything* should be taught to let pupils "reflect critically about the multi-faceted causes of racism and about ethnic and cultural relationships". And they mean *everything*. You might think maths teaching should be a value-free zone. Two plus two makes four, whatever colour you are. Wrong. By placing the emphasis entirely upon "conceptual understanding, algorithmic performance and problem-solving", *maths has become* "culturally cold, barren and dead". This approach "fails to convey the power of mathematics to reveal the inequalities, differences, discriminations and orders in society which ought to be addressed".

Labour's *manifesto* states that more than half of 11-year-olds do not reach expected *standards* in maths, and yet addressing this failure is no longer the priority. Now two plus two equals an unfair division of resources between white and black.

> Two plus two no longer always equals four

American classrooms are dripping with "ethnomathematics", in which maths is taught with an Afrocentric bias. In *Focus on Algebra: an Integrated Approach*, pupils are taught about linear functions with reference to the *Dogon tribe in West Africa* which, the book claims, discovered that Jupiter has satellites, Saturn has rings and Sirius is orbited by an invisible star once every fifty years.

You might know that the Dogon, resourceful though they may have been, did not make these discoveries. You may be thinking that this excursion into African history has next to nothing to do with linear functions. But that misses the point. Afrocentric education — as opposed to simply multicultural education — aims to enthuse black pupils by wresting control of knowledge *from the perceived* "white elites".

I want teachers to enthuse black pupils and parents. But not by wresting control from anyone. Teachers serve all their pupils best by being allowed to decide what is right for their class, so long as pupils are taught to read, write and add up as early as possible. The curriculum was intended to educate the young better, *not to balkanise them*. The only tables that count are those that measure schools, not those which set ethnic groups against each other. If we forget that, our children will have every right to place us in the dock for preferring a bogus notion of equality to genuine opportunity.

george.bridges@the-times.co.uk



"... NO, I TELL A LIE .... IF I CAN READ MY OWN HANDWRITING, IT WAS THE SIXTEENTH ...."

Unaccustomed as I am

Speech-making is a raging epidemic. Yet the art of rhetoric is dead

Simon Jenkins

A good speech is a work of art. Earlier this week, a large party of friends gathered at the Chelsea home *of the architect, Lord Rogers of* Riverside, to salute John Diamond, the writer who is fighting throat cancer. Lord Rogers spoke. Then Mr Diamond spoke. Lord Rogers will not mind my saying that Mr Diamond made the better speech. Mr Diamond has no voice.

He spoke by means of words handwritten on an overhead projector. The words were not written in advance. They were articulated as Mr Diamond thought them, by hand, deftly and deliberately. Each sentence was short, and funny. As the script unfolded we gradually grew used to the rhythm of the pen as proxy for the voice. Each of Mr Diamond's words, of humour, *poignancy and affection for his wife*, Nigella, were given an extraordinary dignity by the act of being handwritten in our presence.

This was speech, not text. The writing was merely a medium linking one speaking brain and many listening ones. It was far more effective than any voice synthesiser. Mr Diamond wrote with pauses, rushes and other tricks of the calligrapher's art, drawing wit and feeling from the intimate act of handwriting. I felt I could hear Mr Diamond's voice in his pen. Over in seven minutes, it was one of the most moving short speeches I have heard. It was completely silent.

Rhetoric is now all but dead. Once *upon a time it joined grammar and* logic in the "trivium" of the medieval liberal arts. To command an audience by the power of speech was considered an accomplishment equal to the power of argument or the power of the pen. Now oratory is an old-fashioned word and rhetorical is a term of abuse. Few people distinguish between a speech and the reading of text. Few people can write text that reads well in public. Even fewer can read it.

Yet we have not stopped giving speeches. *Speech-making is a raging epidemic*, a plague enveloping the social and business life of the nation, impervious to the howls of audiences, the pleading of spouses and the clatter of the Internet. I must hear a dozen speeches each week, bombarding me from lunch and dinner, lecture, reception and presentation. Most are dreadful. The art of hospitality is booming, as is that of the conference. Professional cooks are hired, with the finest wines, the best of settings, the most talented musicians. There is no shortage of visual aids, amplification and reproduction. No expense is spared. Professionalism is all.

Then someone makes a speech. Civilisation suddenly has to pretend that Demosthenes and Cicero never lived. In the Middle Ages, the *speaker would have been trained*. He would have studied rhetoric. He would have known that a speech is the "living sentence of a working mind". In the 17th century, Samuel Butler derided the rhetorician as a *namer of tools*, who takes up lodgings in a "head that's to be let unfurnished". But he believed in the profession of speech. The eminent Mr Pickwick knew rhetoric's first law, that speech is not spoken text, a *law broken by al*most every speaker today. Spontaneous oratory — the art of knowing what you want to say but not how you intend to say it — is almost *confined to broad*casting.

Most speeches in my experience are read, in the words of the giver, "because I can't do it any other way". In which case, don't speak. The implication is that the audience has come merely for the pleasure of gazing on the speaker's face, as he reads what it could read far faster on its own. Read speeches are droned. They cannot *respond to an* audience, maintain eye contact and supply that lifeblood of rhetoric, *which is the transmission of feeling*. The business of oratory, said Hazlitt, is "not to inform but to rouse the mind . . . to add feeling to prejudice and action to feeling". Nor can written speeches rely on spontaneous humour. The written joke, dropped into a text as if in desperation, gives it not levity but lead. In his book on speech-making, John Cleese, illustrates this point by plonking a "light-bulb" joke every few paragraphs throughout the book. Humour should emerge from content. *It is the speaker's call-sign* to his audience, just as laughter is "message received".

Worst of all, almost every speech goes on too long. The rarest sentence in the English language is, "Nice evening, but I thought the speeches were too short". The world *cries out for more music, more food*, more wine, more dancing, more questions even, but never longer speeches. Yet the same people who endure and deplore long speeches, as soon as they are on their feet go on too long themselves. They go on too long at receptions, where the audience stands on one leg, bereft of a drink and praying for them to stop — a torture satirised by Michael Frayn in *Alarms and Excursions*. They go on *too long at dinners*, when everyone wants to go home. Worse, they add speeches to charity galas, needlessly imperilling the generosity of the *donors. I once heard* the violinist Isaac Stern give a sublime solo performance for a charity, then *ruin* it with an interminable speech.

Speaking for too long is a sign of nervous amateurism. Disraeli told his acolytes always to "leave the audience wondering why you had not gone on longer, rather than why you had not sat down sooner". The *most famous speech in history*, the Gettysburg Address, had just ten sentences and 272 words. Verbosity *is the symptom of a muddled mind* — poor Neil Kinnock was famously incapable of speaking briefly. Woodrow Wilson, when asked how long his speeches took to prepare, said a ten-minute speech took a day, a thirty-minute speech an hour, but an hour-long speech "I could start now".

In my experience the best speakers, for all their other limitations, are politicians. They *make so many* and must listen to so many that even the most inept get the hang. The only thing that wrecks a politician's speaking style is when an official prepares a text. He immediately collapses into reading, losing the essence of rhetoric, the illusion of a thought springing newly minted *from the mind. I remember a speech* by Tony Crosland as Education Minister. He arrived late at a dinner and looked down at what his department had prepared. He grimaced and threw it at the press desk. "Report that," he barked, and gave a brilliant off-the-cuff performance. *Every minister should copy*.

The professionals of the conference business have developed tricks to make up for Britain's rhetorical incompetence. They have videos, amplifiers, floppies and slides. They flash a speaker's "bullet points" behind his head, as if both he and his audience were intellectually disabled. Listeners whose eyes must move back and forth from speaker *to screen soon lose interest in both*. It is as if a statistic is not accurate if not written down, an image not real if not screened, a message not delivered if merely spoken. Hazlitt might never have written.

Since the urge to make a speech *appears impervious* to incompetence and shame, speaking must at least be taught. The flower of the medieval trivium must be revived. What was good for Aquinas must be good for the new congregations of Cyberia. Rhetoric should be in the national *curriculum, taught from the cradle* as the essential companion of that other neglected art, the writing of clear, brief English.

Children should be taught the lesson that John Diamond demonstrated this week, ironically through his silence. His lesson was that the spoken word is a glorious faculty, but that its glory does not ultimately rely on the voice, only on the *rhetorical handling of words*. So many speakers lay their words limp on the lectern or dinner table, stripped of any cadence or personality. Their speech moves only with the movement of the reading eye. Mr Diamond's handwritten rhetoric did all the things such speeches never do. It paused, scribbled, joked, hovered, caught the attention of those round him. It made us laugh and cry. It was a speech *in* truth. Who needs a voice when he can make words sing?

comment@the-times.co.uk

DIARY

Charity clash

ANTHONY JULIUS has irritated Gordon Brown. The pet lawyer of the late Diana, Princess of Wales, rarely shows at meetings of the Diana Memorial Committee.

A senior bod there tells me: "Julius is one of only three (the others are Diana's sister, Sarah McCorquodale, and her butler, Paul Burrell) who represent her interests. It's a shame he can't find time. He's cut down on legal work."

So rarely does the would-be poet show up that the Treasury initially doubted if he was even a member. Had Julius applied his big-ish brain more, the committee might have had better luck with its £10 million memorial garden. But Julius puts in lots of work (unpaid) for the charity-helping Memorial Fund — and some wonder if Brown's committee should now retire.

HILLARY CLINTON is off to Morocco on her own, I hear. The First Lady is to escape from Bill at that wonderful palace, La Mamounia, in Marrakesh, where Churchill used to paint. The stunning gardens render it a congenial refuge, despite frisky snake charmers. The manager has dashed back from London to haul up the Stars and Stripes.

■ ZARA PHILLIPS (below), the 17-year-old possessor of the only pierced royal tongue, has saddled up with a dashing new friend:



21-year-old jump jockey Richard Johnson, (above) who is second in the country this season professionally and seems to be doing even better with delightful Zara. "Her Mum, Princess Anne, is a very good friend of the National Hunt trainer David Nicholson," I hear. "Richard is Nicholson's stable jockey. That's how he met Zara, lucky fellow."

WHAT colour pyjamas does William Hague wear? When asked, as politicos are these days, he blushed: "I don't wear anything in bed." Lucky Ffion.

■ WHEN Paddy goes to Heaven, angels will sing away his sexual guilt. *Will I See You in Heaven?*, Father Michael Seed's stirring collection about afterlife, includes a long submission from Ashdown — and my man with the flagellation whip sees this as an apology for his "pantsdown" slip. "It's very strong, full of contrition," says Seed. "The sense of guilt is very strong."

Paddy's office is insistent: "There is nothing in it about atonement. It is about spending time in Heaven with his family." Perhaps Paddy was inspired by the re-emergence of his ex-mistress, Tricia Howard, after he announced he was retiring: "No one has measured up to Paddy before or since," she pants.



HISTORY'S circle is turning on Merseyside: Derek Hatton's old Militant chums have been suspended by the national party for "not being Marxist enough". The Trots say Liverpudlians are "moving too far to the Right". Peter Taaffe, general secretary, tells me they "are too optimistic about the prospects for world capitalism". Cheerful swine.

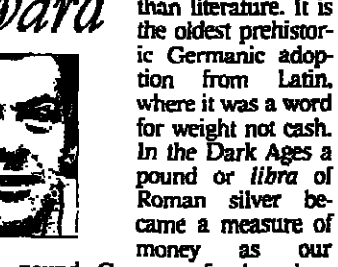
■ HEREDITARY peers are consulting lawyers to wangle redundancy when they receive P45s from the Lords. Insisting they have a contract until the next Parliament, a group led by Lord Palmer may call for pay-offs similar to those won by ex-Cabinet ministers.

Lord Allenby of Megiddo croaks: "There are rumours stirring. We have given our lives to this job and it is being taken away." "Biscuits" Palmer, scion of the lemon puff dynasty, adds: "It might be worth taking this to the European Court".

JASPER GERARD

'Fifty grams of five-cent rice, Fifty grams of banoffee treacle, That's the way the euro goes, Pop goes the weasel'

Philip Howard



The changeover plan for the euro should affect not merely the wide boys in yellow braces in the City, and manufacturers of slot-machines *and insolent holes-in-the-wall* that spit back plastic at us. The Government has allocated millions in order to prepare for this (hypothetical, do not panic!) monetary change.

But it has not yet thought through the literary and linguistic *consequences of getting rid of* the pound. And it should, as a matter (as pontificators pomp it) of urgency. So who better than Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture, *to set up a quango*, partly funded by National Lottery dosh, to prepare English language and literature for the momentous death of the pound sterling, avoirdupois and of other homonymous sorts?

Otherwise, schoolchildren a *century from now may miss the* point of Shylock's pound of flesh, first taken *literatim* by him and then *verbatim* by Portia, trumping him. They will, no doubt, still find Shylock the giant character *of that play, blotting out Antonio* and those other Venetian yuppies as majestically as Macbeth and his Dragon Queen blot out the other assorted Scots in their play. (Methinks the Lady doth writhe and grope and calculate arithmetic too much in her nightie in the current *production in Shaftes*bury Avenue.) To have Shylock insisting on his bond of 0.45359 kilograms of flesh will not fit into an iambic pentameter. So scholars *must* devise a version that preserves the measure without losing the metre.

Similarly urgent work is needed on other literary references to the pound which are about to become obsolete and unintelligible. I suppose that we could *keep both currencies current by* amending the spell to: "When I was one-and-twenty/ I heard a wise man say:/ Give crowns and *pounds* and guineas/ But not *euros* away." This may lose a romantic point. But it makes a new one, undreamt of by Housman: that money can't buy you *friends in the EU: it* can only rent them.

The enigmatic nursery rhyme can be rewritten without undue difficulty as, "Fifty grams of five-cent rice, Fifty *grams* of banoffee treacle. That's the way the euro goes. Pop goes the weasel." The references are said to be to a pub and music-hall in the City Road, to pawning a tailor's iron, and then to Another Newspaper. Bosh. As so often in children's *rhymes, there are* hints of an erotic dance.

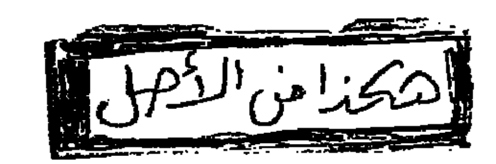
But the *pound has* permeated far more than literature. It is the oldest prehistoric Germanic adoption from Latin, where it was a word for weight not cash. *In the Dark Ages a* pound or *libra* of Roman silver became a measure of money as our pound. German *pfund*, and so on throughout Teutonic languages. It was made up of 100 starling *coins or pennies*, which had a star (*steorra*) in Old English embossed upon them.

The point of money is not in its possession or its name, but in its use. There is nothing *sacrosanct* about our naff pound coins, which slip so easily through the *holes in the Puffa pocket to the* floor of George's car. The last beautiful coins that the Royal *Mint struck were the* Victorian guinea, with St George sataying the dragon on its reverse, behind the Queen Empress, Victoria's ship halfpenny, and the farthing with a robin on its back.

Surely we can design more attractive euro coinage than our present tinkling symbols? But rewriting the language to replace pounds will be harder. "You don't get many of those to the pound" is an ancient sexist remark shared by males as a particularly well-developed pair of *female breasts passes by*. It has spread all over the English-speaking world without any evident process of communication. It is probably a sibling scribbling to Kilroy was 'ere, which goes back to *Marcus fuit hic*.

We *shall* have *task* forces substituting euros and cents for pounds and pence in hundreds of *such tags as "It's a pound to a* pinch of something unpleasant beginning with sh-", and the old Cockney jocularity, "Given away with a pound of tea", as in "Mum's hat looks as if it was given away with a pound of tea".

I know not what we can do *about Ezra Pound, who failed to* impress Gertrude Stein. She said he was a village explainer. Excellent if you were a village. But if you were not, not. Our euro conversion linguists will have to bear in mind that there are three separate homonyms in *pound: an enclosure or pen*, the unit of weight, and to pound or bruise, as with a pestle. They must ponder their imponderable and ponderous cognates, from pension to pond. And we *must* remember that pound or urine, money is of no use to man or beast until we part with it.





THE KINGMAKER'S HEAD

Lafontaine is gone, but unlikely to be a quiet ghost

Yesterday Oskar Lafontaine stunned all Germany by resigning as Finance Minister and leader of the Social Democrats. But the critical moment, it appears, was during a Cabinet meeting on Wednesday when Gerhard Shröder, the German Chancellor, read the riot act to his Red-Green coalition, singling out as a *"strategic error"* the botched tax changes imposed by Red Oskar and his radical Green allies on German business. The result was that Lafontaine walked out. But it is a measure of the reputation for indecision that the Chancellor has deservedly acquired that it was he, not Herr Lafontaine, whom the Bonn rumour mongers had expected to fall on his sword. The story is not over yet.

This is no mere quarrel between prime minister and chancellor, of the kind familiar in British politics. Herr Schröder would never have had the chance to run for the Chancellorship had Herr Lafontaine not permitted it. The king has forced out the kingmaker: and it is still the kingmaker who has the deeper claims on the loyalty of German socialists. Did Herr Schröder do the deed by mistake, as his "surprise" would suggest? This would be a drama in any political context. In modern Germany, where political fratricide is unthinkable, the consequences for the governing coalition, and for the Chancellor himself, are impossible to predict.

Herr Schröder now belatedly assumes the seat at the head of the table which his rival had, conspicuously, usurped; but Herr Lafontaine, whose political ambitions must be assumed to be undimmed, will be the most unquiet ghost since Banquo. Voters may see not strength in their Chancellor but further proof of weakness; for Herr Schröder would not have had to get rid of his Finance Minister had he been capable of controlling him. Unless he now puts a firm stop to the bickering which has been his Government's most obvious characteristic and reveals clear ideas of his own about German policy — of which there has so far been precious little evidence — this will look like the desperation of a drowning man. The timing, just before the critical EU summit this month, is so bad that there is no way that this can be *presented as a premeditated decision.*

Yet, provided that chaos has a time-limit and that the Chancellor is not such a fool as to seek honourable exile for Herr Lafontaine as the next President of the European Commission, this is good news for both Germany and Europe. First, it offers some hope of a saner German economic policy. However inchoate the Chancellor's "new middle" may be, it cannot but be an improvement on Herr Lafontaine's ruinous assault on the profitability of German business and his reckless backing for the unaffordable wage demands pressed by the country's powerful unions. The way could even be open to woo the small, liberal Free Democrat Party into the coalition, on a platform of structural reforms to taxes, pensions and rigid labour laws. All these things Germany desperately needs, if it is to act as a stimulus rather than a drag on Europe's prospects for growth.

Secondly, the European Central Bank should find it easier to cut interest rates. Herr Lafontaine's loud demands have made it difficult previously to do so without risk to its reputation for sound money.

Tony Blair should not, however, assume that Germany will now be a convert to his liberalising agenda for the EU. On tax harmonisation and other measures to stamp out what Germans call "social dumping" and economists call comparative advantage, Herr Lafontaine differs from his colleagues only in his readiness to be brutally frank. Herr Schröder is equally convinced that the euro must lead to political union. He just says so in a softer voice and with a more winning smile.

THE CAP STILL GROWS

A farm deal that makes mockery of reform

Any negotiation that ends just before dawn tends to be hailed by the bleary negotiators as an historic breakthrough. Daylight brings truth. So it is with the bargain stitched up yesterday by European Union agriculture ministers on "reforming" the common agricultural policy. Its best claim to historic status is that, even by the low standards of EU negotiation, it represents an unusually complete triumph of sectoral special pleading over economic realism and sound policy.

By all the yardsticks which this negotiation had to satisfy it falls well short. The deal will not solve the EU's immediate budgetary problems, let alone meet the challenges of EU enlargement. It will not help the farmers who most need support, or free those who are able to compete on open markets from the restrictive lunacies of price-fixing or production quotas. It in no way fits the EU, the world's second largest exporter and biggest importer of farm produce, for the next round of global trade negotiations. And rather than cut the cost of a system that already absorbs half of all spending by Brussels, as the last EU summit had instructed farm ministers to do, it adds a further £680 million to the £3.7 billion the Commission's original proposals would already have added to the 2000-06 CAP budget.

The final decision on this deal, a crucial component of what is supposed to be a far-reaching overhaul of EU finances to make room for new members, rests with heads of government. There is a strong possibility that it will unravel well before the start of the EU summit on March 24. It deserves to do so, although there is no guarantee that further haggling will produce improvements. Presented with Commission proposals that were already well short of what is required for real reform, the farm ministers have either postponed "difficult" decisions, such as abolishing the dairy quotas that artificially prevent British farmers from meeting domestic demand, or taken decisions that are blatantly retrograde. A 30 per cent cut in guaranteed beef payments, for example, was the absolute minimum required to avoid a return to the beef mountains for which the EU was notorious in the past. Instead, it will be 20 per cent; and it is the same story with grains. Steeper cuts were, and are, indispensable.

Even more disappointing is the rejection of the few proposals which could be classed as structural reforms rather than mere tinkering. The first would have required national governments, rather than EU central funds, to bear part of the cost of compensating farmers for cuts in guaranteed prices. Only when taxpayers see that each failure to cut the costs of the CAP has a direct impact on spending on other national priorities will there be serious political pressure to change the system. This was stopped by France — proving that Germany will still, when it comes to the crunch, put the Franco-German marriage ahead of the common EU interest.

The second was the Commission's plan to concentrate direct financial assistance on poorer farmers, while setting a ceiling on compensation payments to those perfectly able to prosper without public subsidy. The ceiling was lofty: it would have scaled down payments after the first £70,000. This time, it was Britain which blocked the way, to protect its most efficient big farms some of which stand to receive a wholly indefensible £700,000 a year. Tony Blair claims to be dissatisfied with this miserable piece of cobbling. But a fresh start is impossible unless he admits Britain's share of the blame and alters course.

BATTLE OF THE DINNER PLATE

The Prince enjoys the hospitality of Uruguay

Putting his best foot forward, the Prince of Wales tangoed his way on to front pages all over the country yesterday. He could be forgiven for being a little less thrusting as *he proceeds across the borders into* Uruguay. British envoys have not always found there the hospitality they might have expected. Some of them still recall how Sir Geoffrey Jackson, the late British Ambassador in Montevideo, was captured by a guerrilla group, imprisoned in damp dungeons and had to pass several months in stoical isolation before persuading his captors to set him free.

These mere diplomatic infelicities may now be history. But the course of Latin American politics flows, as ever, more swiftly than the smooth River Plate by which that great World War II naval battle was fought. After 11 years of ill-tempered military rule, Uruguay returned to civilian government in 1985. The current head of state, President Sanguinetti, presides over what is indeed a sanguine democracy. The days when this pocket-sized nation was known as the Switzerland of South America are long gone. But the quality of life in Uruguay is still far better than that of *most other countries* in the continent.

In the language of the native Charrua Indians, Uruguay means "river of the painted birds". Parakeets screech through plantations, bright painted waterfowl paddle lagoons. These have become one of the tourist attractions of an unassuming nation which emerges from reticence once *every four years when minds wander to the* subject of past World Cup winners.

Uruguay gained the world championship twice, and though that was long ago — in 1930 and 1950 — it remains remarkable that so small a nation should have raised such teams. Just three million people inhabit a country the size of England and Wales, with well over half of them in the slow, time-warped capital of Montevideo.

The only conflict, then, that Prince Charles is likely to face in this now peaceful and courteous country is the battle of the dinner plate. In the land where Fray Bentos is a town not a tin, where the cattle which graze the sprawling pastures outnumber the inhabitants three to one, meat is a mainstay. Steaks, each the size of a decent principality, are set sizzling on grills. A good local parrillada washed down with regional wine makes a feast fit for a monarch — and his retinue. As Prince Charles tucks in, a nation may take pride that this is not the first time it has served the British well. Some of his countrymen still think fondly of the tins of meat from Uruguay which fuelled the Allies through the century's hungriest years.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Budget impact on social inequality

From Mr David de Gale

Sir, There is an important distinction between "stealth taxes" and "tax increases" (Anatole Kaletsky's article, March 11). The latter have to be paid; the former are, to some extent, voluntary. One can smoke or drink less, or not at all; a small car will make up for the higher cost of petrol.

"Modestly higher taxes" are needed, as Mr Kalestsky accepts, to rebalance national expenditure to the advantage of the young (education), the old (pensions/health) and small businesses. To achieve this, even on a partially voluntary basis, is a remarkable accomplishment.

This Budget is a confirmation for those of us who reluctantly voted against the Conservative Government in the belief that a change was necessary to alleviate serious social imbalances.

If Mr Hague takes note of this, then he may yet become Prime Minister. But, to judge by the uniform howls against the Chancellor by your correspondents today, he has a very hard task ahead.

Yours etc,
DAVID de GALE,
Dernford Barn,
Saxmundham, IP17 2BQ
March 11.

From the Director of the Catholic Housing Aid Society

Sir, This society welcomes the Chancellor's decision to phase out mortgage interest tax relief, which has distorted the housing market and subsidised the better off. However, instead of funding a tax reduction, we believe the money saved should be used to prevent homelessness among low-income homeowners.

Unlike those who rent their home, homeowners on low incomes are ineligible for help until six to nine months after losing their job. As a result many experience arrears, repossession and homelessness.

As a step towards helping the 30,000 families who face losing their homes this year, Miras savings should be recycled back into housing to help prevent homelessness, regardless of whether people rent or buy, through an integrated housing benefit.

Yours sincerely,
ROBINA RAFFERTY,
Director, CHAS,
209 Old Marylebone Road, NW1 5QT.
March 11.

From Mr Les Holley

Sir, I should like to congratulate the Chancellor on an excellent Budget. People such as myself on a low income will begin to feel that working is worthwhile at last.

Yours faithfully,
L. HOLLEY,
23a West Street,
Harrow on the Hill,
Middlesex HA1 3ED.
March 10.

From Mr Mark McArthur-Christie

Sir, Drivers will be much poorer after the Budget, with another 6 per cent hike in the price of fuel. Is this just the start of a Labour campaign to force them off the roads into poorly funded and inadequate public transport? The freedoms brought by the car are increasingly being ignored and drivers made to feel guilty.

Car taxes should be ring-fenced and spent on improving the road network.

The Association of British Drivers is launching a campaign for fair taxation: isn't it time drivers were listened to?

Yours faithfully,
MARK McARTHUR-CHRISTIE
(Roads and traffic spokesman),
The Association of British Drivers,
PO Box 19608, London SE19 2ZW.
March 10.

From Mr Gavin R. Dobson

Sir, Why is it that perfectly legitimate activities are sanctimoniously tainted as "loopholes", that must then be "closed" after which they must be "taxed"?

I am getting uneasy about the enveloping mist of fiscal correctness coming from our controllers.

Yours faithfully,
GAVIN R. DOBSON,
The Blair, Blairlogie,
Stirlingshire FK9 5PX.
March 11.

Hague's future

From Mr N. J. D. Baptiste

Sir, Tim Hames claims (article, March 4) that it is likely that the biggest impact of this year's local authority elections will be on the standing of William Hague. The electorate, however, has already given its verdict: in 638 local council by-elections since the last general election the Conservatives had 80 net gains, Labour 68 net losses, with the Liberal Democrats breaking even.

Yours faithfully,
N. J. D. BAPTISTE,
22 The Orchard, Milford-on-Sea,
Lymington, Hampshire SO41 0SR.
March 4.

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.
e-mail to: *letters@the-times.co.uk*

America's use of its global power

From Mr Mark R. Harrington

Sir, Libby Purves has written an informative article regarding the banana "crisis" ("This harvest of greed", March 9; see also letters, March 5, 8 and 10). However, I believe her labeling of the United States of America as a "bully" ignores the reality of the United States' genuine role in international affairs.

Allow me to state what I deduce is an extremely common viewpoint here across the pond. Beginning with the Marshall Plan, the people of the US have demonstrated for over 50 years their generosity and commitment to assisting peoples economically around the globe. Even during the most difficult economic spells the US has remained the world's largest donor of money to developing economies as well to the economies of those recovering from natural and other disasters.

Is it wrong, therefore, to expect our largesse to be rewarded from time to time with more than a mere thank you? If we are to provide the cash — be it to Europe, the Middle East, Africa, or wherever — we will, and do, expect to have a voice in certain economic decisions. Nations who do not wish to see the US in this role should not accept any US dollars. We are all free to cut off our noses to spite our faces.

Quite frankly, many Americans are fed up with receiving nothing but insults whenever our domestic economic interests conflict with our global economic interests

Respectfully,
MARK R. HARRINGTON,
3443 Mohanna Street,
Apartment 2204,
Dallas, Texas 75209.
mark8plus@aol.com
March 10.

From Mr Christopher D. Kent

Sir, Having read Libby Purves's article, I am ashamed, as an American, by my country's actions in the so-called banana war.

Now that the US is the world's only "superpower", we are becoming increasingly crass, amoral and — I'm afraid — truly imperialistic.

Yours sincerely,
CHRISTOPHER D. KENT,
PO Box 739,
Westbrook, Connecticut 06498.
March 9.

Trade disputes with US

From Mr Richard Branson

Sir, I have been following the dispute between the US and the EU about bananas with interest (letters, March 5, 8 and 10). I cannot help comparing the US Government's claim to moral high ground in this case with its apparent determination to maintain the moral low ground in aviation matters.

The US has a policy of discriminating against foreign airlines such as Virgin Atlantic in favour of its own carriers. The list includes the "fly America" policy, under which US civil servants or anyone with a US Government contract is forced to use US airlines; restrictions on leasing aircraft to US carriers; attempts to ban gambling on foreign aircraft in international airspace in contravention of international treaty.

This is against a background of repeated US protestations about the benefits of competition and criticisms of the UK for refusing to cave in and accept a new bilateral aviation agreement, *which I believe is hopelessly* biased towards US airlines.

The UK Government is absolutely right to resist US bullying tactics. Whether it is also right not to react to US discrimination against UK carriers is more of a moot point. UK civil servants can use US airlines: the latter can bid for Ministry of Defence travel contracts; US aircraft are extensively leased to European companies. The loss of income for UK airlines is considerable.

Perhaps it is time the Government was more forceful regarding blatant discrimination against UK companies. The US authorities might then realise that they cannot preach the benefits of free trade only when it suits them.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD BRANSON
(Chairman),
Virgin Atlantic Airways
11 Holland Park, W11 3TH.
March 10.

Pontius Pilate

From Mr P. M. Burrows

Sir, If Pontius Pilate was the harsh, illiberal ruler described by Jewish sources ("Pontius Pilate: the truth", Weekend, March 6; letters, March 10), why was he so fair-minded towards Jesus?

The answer must be that after being led by the chief priests to expect a Che Guevara he was nonplussed to find himself confronted with a Mahatma Gandhi.

Yours sincerely,
P. M. BURROWS
(Author, *Gospel of Doubt*, 1998),
41 Harrison Close,
Reigate, Surrey RH2 7HS.
March 6.

From Mrs Janet Todd

Sir, Though the truth is far from certain, Peter Stothard has given us a valuable insight into the background of Christ's trial and crucifixion.

I believe that his article, illustrated with Jörg Breu the Elder's brilliant painting, will do more to remind people to go to church this Easter than a hundred posters of Che Guevara. The fracas over the Churches' much-publicised poster (letters, January 11) has died down at the moment, but the controversy will be forced on our notice again if, despite an official complaint to the Advertising Standards Authority, it goes up on hoardings and church noticeboards before Easter.

Yours faithfully,
JANET TODD,
Foxton Lodge,
Foxton Close, Oxford OX2 8LB.
March 6.

From Mr Desmond Briggs

Sir, I have always relished the story of the 18th-century bishop in the Church of Ireland who decided to look through the Creed he recited daily in his chapel in order to determine how much of it he actually believed in. He was a rationalist, and ended up with "I believe in . . . Pontius Pilate".

Yours faithfully,
DESMOND BRIGGS,
Old Werretts, Castle Combe,
Chippenham, Wiltshire SN14 7HH.
March 10.

The Emir of Bahrain

From Sir Roger Tomkys, Master of Pembroke College, Cambridge

Sir, May I add a footnote to your obituary of the Emir of Bahrain (March 8)?

You emphasised modern Bahrain's dependence upon Saudi Arabia and the United States. But today's Bahrain was built upon decades of cooperation with Britain which brought education, employment and prosperity to a tiny Emirate with very limited oil or other resources.

Sheikh Isa, like his father and grandfather, made the British welcome, and counted other expatriates by extension as inviting almost equal treatment. This friendship was not without cost: geography and history, *with or without the causeway* linking the two countries, made Bahrain dependent on Saudi Arabia: but in an era of Moslem/Christian stress, Christian worship in Bahrain remained free and open with Sheikh Isa's support and he sent packing, despite his country's vulnerability, any neighbouring religious zealots who pressed him to follow the policies of the mainland.

Sheikh Isa was instinctively supportive of British policies and a great admirer of the Royal Family. In Bahrain's domestic affairs he was a gifted conciliator.

The succession and country are in good hands, but Britain and the British people have lost an especially warm and sincere friend, and many of us feel deep personal sorrow at his death.

Yours faithfully,
ROGER TOMKYS
(Ambassador to Bahrain, 1981-84),
Pembroke College,
Cambridge CB2 1RF.
master@pem.cam.ac.uk
March 8.

Gainsborough portrait

From Mr M. J. Michell

Sir, I share the regret of other Marlburians at the reported plan of Marlborough College to sell Henry Hony's great gift of the Gainsborough portrait (details and photograph, March 8).

That I have any appreciation of painting owes much to this picture. Your photograph cannot convey the overwhelming brightness and splendour of its impression on a schoolboy, nor the sense of being in the presence of a piece of work that is of the best in its field. That, I suggest, is worth just as much to the education of the next generation as a swimming pool or "arts centre".

I also remember Henry Hony as a benefactor of great kindness to many boys as well as to the college. I believe his gift was a very particular one, not intended to be convertible into alternative assets at will.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN MICHELL
(Marlborough College, 1956-60),
61 Sunderland Road,
London SE23 2PS.
March 8.

From Mrs Elisabeth J. Bartlett

Sir, I am concerned about the wider effect of Marlborough College's attempt to sell its Gainsborough.

Who will want to give donations like this to deserving institutions in future? What better way to make such donations simply stop?

Yours faithfully,
ELISABETH BARTLETT,
119 Burbage Road, SE21 7AF.
March 9.

Reality of right to roam 'gamble'

From the Chairman of The Moorland Association

Sir, So now we know. The moors — along with other areas — are to be "opened up" (report and leading article, March 9). But what will the reality be? Interference with management; disturbance taking its toll on wildlife, with numbers diminishing; bureaucrats having a field day; lawyers prospering; the public confused; the countryside littered with direction and temporary closure signs.

The Government is taking a high-risk gamble with the future of our unique upland heritage. The pity is that it could all have been done peacefully and in a spirit of true British compromise.

For the last ten years, members of this Association have volunteered to establish a locally agreed system of access with sufficient paths and open areas throughout moorland in England and Wales.

Instead we now face a future full of complexity, uncertainty and potential antagonism, coupled with an expensive administrative nightmare for everyone.

Yours sincerely,
A. MILBANK, Chairman,
The Moorland Association,
16 Castle Park, Lancaster LA1 1YG.

From Dr A. P. O'Connor

Sir, My wife and I were amused to hear that a great breakthrough has been achieved in opening up the countryside to ramblers.

We have walked the Oxfordshire countryside for 15 years and have long noticed that the throngs of ramblers thin out 400 yards from any car park or road. Where are the rambling hordes waiting to fill the countryside?

Yours faithfully,
A. P. O'CONNOR,
2 Castle End,
Deddington, Oxfordshire OX15 0TE.

From Mr R. C. Millar

Sir, You report that the Country Landowners Association believes the proposed legislation on right to roam "has destroyed the goodwill of the countryside".

What goodwill was that?

Regards,
R. C. MILLAR,
25 Boulters Court,
Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 8TH.
March 9.

Seeing the light

From Professor R. A. Weale

Sir, Your timely report (March 9) on research into the psychological benefits of working in natural as opposed to artificial light shows that there is nothing new under the Sun.

When, in the 1960s, consideration was being given to the construction of windowless commercial buildings, because windows were expensive given the building methods then prevalent, ambient artificial light also received much attention.

It was thought that its uncomfortable aspect was due less to its artificiality than to its constancy. Artificial light began to be looked on as an amenity that could be variable, much as daylight. The hike in energy costs in the 1970s stopped all that.

It would seem that those concerned with the problems you mention might like to take a new look at varying internal environments. Variable dimmers, controlled by random programs, might help to achieve an environment in which time moves faster than it seems in steady illumination.

Yours very truly,
ROBERT WEALE,
as from: The Athenaeum,
Pall Mall, SW1Y 5ER.
March 10.

Women priests

From the Reverend John Papworth

Sir, Why all this fuss about women priests (letters, March 4 and 9)? With the house on fire have people no other preoccupations than to worry about the gender of the fire brigade?

With respect,
JOHN PAPWORTH
(Editor), *Fourth World Review*,
24 Abercorn Place, NW8 9XP.
March 9.

News at 6.30

From Mr Mycal Miller

Sir, ITN are to be congratulated for ringing in the changes, but it seems odd to have "bongs" on the half-hour. Has someone dropped a clanger?

Yours faithfully,
MYCAL MILLER,
8 Homestead Park, NW2 6JB.
March 9.

Increased incentive?

From Mr John O'Byrne

Sir, Would a National No Smoking Month offer more encouragement to those who want to give up the habit for good (report, March 11)?

Yours truly,
JOHN O'BYRNE,
2 Mount Argus Court,
Harold's Cross, Dublin 6W.
March 11.



COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
March 11: The Hon Timothy Lewin was received by The Queen and delivered up the Insignia of the Order of the Garter worn by his father, the late Lord Lewin.

The following were received by The Queen as Her Majesty's Ambassadors: Mr John Macgregor (Warsaw) and Mr William Erhman (Luxembourg).

Mrs Macgregor and Mrs Erhman were also received by The Queen.

Dr Peter January was received in audience by The Queen upon his appointment as Her Majesty's Ambassador to Tirana.

Miss Linda Duffield was received in audience by The Queen upon her appointment as British High Commissioner to Colombo.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
March 11: The Duke of Edinburgh, Founder and Chairman of the International Trustees of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award International Association, this morning arrived at RAF Northolt from Belgium.

Brigadier Miles Hunt-Davis was in attendance.

His Royal Highness, Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, later chaired a Meeting of the Cambridge European Trust at Buckingham Palace.

The Duke of Edinburgh, Patron and Trustee of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, this evening gave a Dinner for Charter Founder Members at Buckingham Palace.

ST JAMES'S PALACE
March 11: The Prince of Wales this morning attended a ceremony at the Casa de Cultura, Buenos Aires, where he was presented with the keys to the city of Buenos Aires by the Mayor, Dr Fernando de la Rua.

Afterwards, His Royal Highness and Dr de la Rua visited the Villa Lugano Housing Project in Buenos Aires.

Subsequently, The Prince of Wales opened the new headquarters building of Metrogas.

His Royal Highness later attended a reception given by Her Majesty's Ambassador, Mr William Marsden and Mrs Marsden. His Royal Highness this afternoon departed by air for Uruguay.

The Prince of Wales later arrived in the Oriental Republic of Uruguay and was received by the President of Uruguay, Dr Julio Sanguinetti.

His Royal Highness afterwards laid a wreath at the Artigas Monument.

The Prince of Wales later attended a ceremony at Cabildo de Montevideo where he received the Keys of the City of Montevideo.

His Royal Highness this evening attended a dinner given in his honour by the President of Uruguay.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
March 11: The Prince Edward this afternoon arrived at London Heathrow Airport from British Columbia, Canada.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
March 11: The Princess Royal this morning departed Japan for the Philippines.

Her Royal Highness this afternoon arrived in Manila and was received by Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Philippines (Mr Alan Collins).

The Princess Royal later visited the British School in Manila.

Her Royal Highness was this evening entertained to dinner by The President of the Republic of the Philippines at Malacanang Palace.

KENSINGTON PALACE
March 11: The Duchess of Gloucester, Patron, Army Families Federation, this morning received Mrs Geoffrey Sheldon (Chairman) and Mrs Christopher Bonney (Vice-Chairman).

Her Royal Highness, Patron, the Bobath Centre (for Children with Celebral Palsy), this afternoon visited the Centre, 250 East End Road, London W2.

The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester this evening attended the Council for Music in Hospitals' Gala Concert at St Johns Smith Square, London SW1.

ST JAMES'S PALACE
March 11: The Duke of Kent, Trustee of the National Science and Industry Museum, this evening attended the Science Museum Annual Dinner, Exhibition Road, London SW7.

School news

Alton College
General Sir David Ramsbotham, GCB, CBE, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, delivered the Alton College Foundation Lecture on Thursday, March 11. Nicholas Walters presided; Grace Jowett introduced the speaker and Katherine Brown proposed the vote of thanks.

Reigate Grammar School
Reigate Grammar School announces the following awards for entry in September 1999:

10+ and 11+ Scholarships
David Armstrong-McKay, Reigate St Mary's Preparatory School, Reigate; Peter Arnold, Chinthurst School, Tadworth; Olenka Dean, Micklefield School, Reigate; Urpinder Grewal, Doods Brow School, Nutfield; Katherine Hurrell, Redehall Preparatory School, Reigate; Gordon McInroy, Reigate St Mary's Preparatory School, Reigate; Laura Pendower, Bramley School, Walton-on-the-Hill; Andrew Rivers, Wray Common County Primary School; Jack Tavener, Felbridge County Primary School, East Grinstead.

13+ Scholarship
Peter Hurrell, Copthorne Preparatory School, Copthorne.

Music Scholarships
Amy Galluzzo, Dunottar School, Reigate; Elizabeth Oliphant, Micklefield School, Reigate; Vivienne Moss, Reigate Grammar School, Reigate.

Music Exhibitions
Tom Hughes, Reigate Grammar School, Reigate.

Dinners

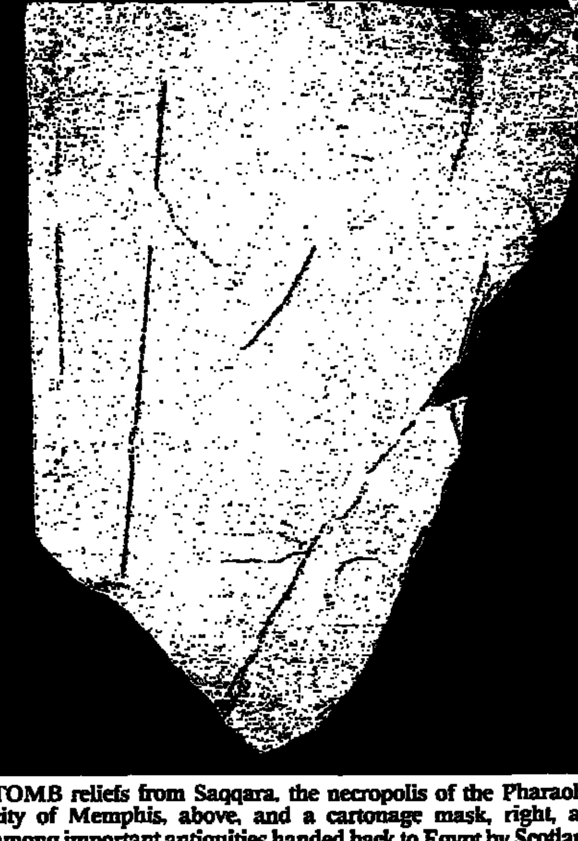
Navy Board
The American Ambassador and Lord Hurd of Westwell, CH, Chairman of British Invisibles, attended a Lent Term dinner given by the Navy Board last night at Admiralty House. Admiral Sir Michael Boyce, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff, presided.

Science Museum
Professor Lord Winston, accompanied by Lady Winston, was the guest speaker at the Science Museum's annual dinner held yesterday at the Museum. Sir Peter Williams, chairman of the board of trustees, presided.

Ye Olde Triponians of Hampton in Arden
The annual dinner of Ye Olde Triponians of Hampton in Arden will be held today at Fentham Hall. Ye Olde Mayor will preside.

Service dinner

Air Marshal T.I. Jenner, Chief of Staff and Deputy Commander-in-Chief, Strike Command, was the guest of honour at the annual dinner of the Universities of Glasgow and Strathclyde Air Squadron held last night at Trades House, Glasgow.



TOMB reliefs from Saqqara, the necropolis of the Pharaohs' city of Memphis, above, and a cartonage mask, right, are among important antiquities handed back to Egypt by Scotland Yard yesterday. They had been smuggled out of the country by a restorer who disguised them as garish trinkets. The operation was organised by Jonathan Tokeley-Parry, who was jailed in 1997 for six years. Police were alerted after a British Museum expert recognised one item, which he knew should be in Egypt.

ADRIAN SHERRATT

Royal engagements

The Queen will visit HM Customs and Excise VAT Collection Centre in Southend at 10.25.

The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh will visit South East Essex College, Southend at 11.20; Basildon District Council Offices, at 1.10, to mark the 50th anniversary of the foundation of Basildon New Town; the Towngate Theatre in Basildon Centre at 2.40; and the newly erected Bell Tower of St Martin's Church at 3.05 to open specially engraved doors before attending a thanksgiving service to mark the anniversary.

The Duke of Edinburgh will visit Keymed (Medical and Industrial Equipment) in Southend at 10.25; and as Chancellor of Cambridge University, will attend a reception and dinner at Sidney Sussex College, at 7.30.

Luncheons

HM Government
Mr George Robertson, Secretary of State for Defence, was the host at a luncheon given by Her Majesty's Government yesterday at Admiralty House in honour of Mr Pavol Kanis, Minister for Defence of the Slovak Republic.

London University
Professor Graham Zellick, Vice-Chancellor of London University, was the host at a luncheon held yesterday at 52 Gordon Square in honour of Mr Peter Caruana, QC, Chief Minister of Gibraltar.

Meeting

Royal Institute of International Affairs
Lord Carrington, KG, CH, Mr Emmerson Mnangagwa, Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Zimbabwe, Lord Owen, CH, and Brigadier Andrew Parker Bowles were the principal speakers at a discussion of the Royal Institute of International Affairs held yesterday at Chatham House.

Calls to the Bar

Call Day: March 11

Lincoln's Inn
T P Maxted, Leicester; S Dorarai, Singapore; L J Harwood, Denton, Manchester; A M Shahjahan, London E2; Dr S J Stevenson, London SW4; M R Gibbons, London W14; Chong Shin Yih, Singapore; R Selvanayagam, Sutton, Surrey; A C Bury, Blackburn; P I Richardson, London W14; D A Blythin, Conwy, North Wales; H Rashid, Radcliffe, Manchester; R I James, Cheltenham; J B Corrish, Bromley, Kent; Q A Hawkins, London NW1; F M Loy, London SW7; Jeremy Yinn Hsin Choo, Singapore; D A T Green, Quinton, Birmingham; B I Torrens, Somerset Park, Co Londonderry; M E Saunders, Alderley Edge, Cheshire; N M Ashley, Witham, Essex; A O Adeoso, London E15; A Wong Kang Way, Johor, Malaysia; R J T Craig, London SE5; A R Chowdhury, London E17; N D H Edwards, West Didsbury, Manchester; E A Harwick, London SW1; T Khan, Wroughton, Wiltshire; W J Houseley, London N14; R I Walton, London W11; R Rajendra, Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia; C Bitounis, London NW1; N S Marapana, Colombo, Sri Lanka; S Palar, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; S K Bhachu, Osterley, Middlesex; D J Wise, Fleet, Hampshire; P A Howes, Eastbourne, East Sussex; A M Quinn, Jersey; R J Thompson, London SE6; J Danvers, London SE13; M A Lloren, Burke, Virginia, USA; Z H Jafferji, West Knighton, Leicestershire; S M A Rahaman, London N22; A M Saul, Morley, Leeds; P C R Wood, Harpenden, Hertfordshire, a former solicitor; M J G Graham, Tynemouth, Tyne and Wear, a former chief crown prosecutor.

Inner Temple
P Tueje, London SE13; B M Adamson, London WC1; R P Holubowicz, London W7; F Sayed, London NW6; J McDougall, London N1; G A Green, Boston, Lincolnshire; C A Pollard, London SW17; A H Louis, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich; G R Bastable, Bath; S J Shannon, London E3; M L Brewer, Dunfermline, Fife; R Dulay, Walsall, West Midlands; T J C Grey, West Clandon, Surrey; D E Grant, London SW8; D R Sullivan, Hove, East Sussex; L A Daniels, London W11; V Robertson, Hempnall, Norwich; S D Darlington-Pearce, Bourne End, Buckinghamshire.

In absentia
M R Soepersad, London N18.

Middle Temple
C H Maclean, London SE15; R M Rolls, Bristol; F Zafar, Aberdare, Mid Glamorgan; R W Hoare, Banbury, Oxfordshire; R C Kreisberger, North Wembley, Middlesex; C Christou, Eastbourne, East Sussex; T Platten, North Ferriby, Yorkshire; G A Stanley, Farnham, Surrey; Seng Hong Yeo, Singapore; J F Percival, Worcester Park, Surrey; J C Sloan, Croydon, Surrey; K C Fogarty, Barrister of Ireland, Dublin; E L Kuzner, London E2; M Hall, Manchester, M3; H F G Mount, London NW5; S J Cridland, Chester; K Molloy, London SW15; L P Pilgrim, London SW16; A Sinha, London WC1; C S L Say, Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia; E J Messenger, Lowsonford, Warwickshire; N A Tinney, Hatfield, Hertfordshire; D A C McDowell, London SW15; H L Whitehouse, Shifnal, Shropshire; L J Beck, Petts Wood, Kent; R Rubin Mohideen, Singapore; I W Carnochan, Billericay, Essex; E Christou, London N13; H M Rough-Brooks, London N16; E Shurdom, London N1; A L Baillie, London SW3; S Chand, Blackburn, Lancashire; A J Pay, London W6; Professor L Lustgarten, Oxford; L J Morgan, a former solicitor, Worsley, Manchester.

Gray's Inn
D E Wallace, London W2; G C W Spencer, Grampound, Truro, Cornwall; D M Robinson, Cirencester, Gloucestershire; G M Rogers, St Helens, Merseyside; N N Allen, St James, Jamaica; E L Pledge, Beckenham, Kent; J Mahalingam, Harrow on the Hill, Middlesex; M-T Espindola, Baildon, Shipley, West Yorkshire; S Philip, Keston, Kent; J R P Rogers, Sherborne, Dorset; E Osammor, London WC1; A Thomas, Limassol, Cyprus; S N De Silva, London E9; A A Suzin, London W9; P J Southern, Blackmore, Essex; G Rees, London N4; C J Woodford, Weybridge, Surrey; D W Gibson, Oxshott, Surrey; S Ash, London SW4; S T Cairns, London SE1; J N Sharpe, London EC1; C Bostock, London WC2; J R Crawford, Cambridge; M Wyn Jones, a former solicitor, Ormskirk, Lancashire; G J Marcus, a South African practitioner, Sandringham, Johannesburg; S E Weiner, a South African practitioner, Saxonwold, JHB, South Africa; R A K Goddard, a former solicitor, Prestbury, Cheshire; D V Lewis, Pontardawe, Swansea; S L Peters, Llanelli, South Wales; M J Bradley, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, British West Indies.

Birthdays today

Sir Antony Acland, former diplomat, 69; Dr Giovanni Agnelli, honorary chairman, Fiat Group, 78; Mr Rudolph Agnew, chairman, Lasmo, 65; Mr Edward Albee, dramatist, 71; Mr R.E. Alley, art historian, 73; Mrs Virginia Bottomley, MP, 51; Mr Norbert Brainin, concert violinist, 76; Sir Geoffrey de Bellaigue, Surveyor Emeritus of the Queen's Works of Art, 68; Mr Willie Duggan, rugby player, 49; Mr John Gross, writer and editor, 64; Mr Peter Gwynn-Jones, Garter Principal King of Arms, 59; Lord Hogg of Cumbernauld, 61; Mr Philip Jones, former Principal, Trinity College of Music, 71; Mr Anish Kapoor, artist and sculptor, 45; Mr Anthony Loehnis, banker, 63; Mr David Mellor, QC, broadcaster and business adviser, 50; Miss Liza Minnelli, actress and singer, 53; Mr David Mlinaric, interior designer, 60; the Hon Roland Moyle, former MP, 71; Mr Patrick Procktor, painter, 63; Lord Rotherwick, 45; Mr James Taylor, singer, 51; Viscount Trenchard, 48; Mr Julian Treuherz, Keeper of Galleries for the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, 52; Miss Elizabeth Vaughan, mezzo-soprano, 62; Lord Wallace of Saltaire, 58; Mr Paul Way, golfer, 36; His Honour Sir Frank White, 72; Mr David O. Williams, trade unionist, 73; Mr David Wilmot, Chief Constable, Greater Manchester, 56; Miss Googie Withers, actress, 82.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: John Aubrey, antiquary, Easton Pierse, Wiltshire, 1626; Thomas Arne, composer of *Rule Britannia*, London, 1710; Kemal Ataturk, 1st President of Turkey 1923-38, Salonika, 1881; Vaslav Nijinsky, ballet dancer and choreographer, Kiev, 1890; Jack Kerouac, novelist, Lowell, Massachusetts, 1922.

DEATHS: St Gregory, Pope 590-604, Rome, 604; Sun Yat-Sen, President of the Republic of China 1911-12, Peking, 1925; Anne Frank, diarist, Belsen concentration camp, 1945.

Appointments

Sir John Soane's Museum
Mr John Studzinski, Managing Director of Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, has been appointed a Life Trustee of Sir John Soane's Museum. Mr Richard MacCormac, CBE, RA, PPRIBA, and Mr Simon Jervis, PFSA, have been appointed designated Trustees, representing the Royal Academy and the Society of Antiquaries.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr A.J. Arkwright and Miss A. Robb
The engagement is announced between Johnnie, eldest son of Mrs Arkwright and the late P.F. (Pup) Arkwright, of Warwickshire, and Arabella, eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs Alistair Robb, of Somerset.

Mr J.J.C. Blok and Miss L.E. Clark
The engagement is announced between Jeremy, son of Mr and Mrs Tony Blok, of Hookwood, Surrey, and Louise, daughter of Mr and Mrs Robert Clark, of Felden, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire.

Mr J.R. Elliot and Miss C.S.J. Tarling
The engagement is announced between James, son of Mr and Mrs Keith Elliot, of Ampleforth, North Yorkshire, and Camilla, daughter of Mr and Mrs Nikolas Tarling, of Chelsea, London, SW3.

Mr J.A.S. Everett and Miss J. Burgess
The engagement is announced between James, only son of Mr and Mrs Richard Everett, of Downham Market, Norfolk, and Jayne, second daughter of Mr and Mrs John Burgess, of Torrevieja, Spain.

Mr D.McG. Gilbertson and Miss N.J. Smith
The engagement is announced between Douglas, son of Mr and Mrs Alan Gilbertson, of Lingfield, Surrey, and Nicola, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Colin Smith, of Ford, Gloucestershire.

Mr C.G.O. Keatinge and Miss Y. Wake
The engagement is announced between Colin, younger son of Lieutenant Colonel and Mrs Hugh Keatinge, of Wilsford-cum-Lake, Wiltshire, and Yukie, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs Kanji Wake, of Hiroshima, Japan.

Mr A.J. Napier and Miss Z.L.M. Punshon
The engagement is announced between Andrew, elder son of Mr and Mrs Dennis Napier, of Windsor, Berkshire, and Zoë, daughter of Mr and Mrs Richard Punshon, of Tilford, Surrey.

Mr K. Hare and Miss S. Chrysotomou
The engagement took place on February 9, 1999, between Karl Hare, of Fleet, Hampshire, and Sophie Chrysotomou, of Cyprus.

Mr C.H. Palmer and Countess Charlotte von der Schulenburg
The engagement is announced between Charles, son of Mr and Mrs Michael Palmer, of Whitchurch, Hampshire, and Charlotte, daughter of Fritz, Graf von der Schulenburg, of London, and Mrs Shiela Peczenik, of London.

Mr P.J. Pennal and Miss J.E. Kemp
The engagement is announced between Patrick, middle son of Mr and Mrs C.F. Pennal, of Maidstone, Kent, and Julie, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs C.S. Kemp, of East Grinstead, Sussex.

Dr P.M. Ranstorp and Miss C.N. Baring
The engagement is announced between Magnus, son of Herr Per Ranstorp and Fru Ingrid Rudesjo, of Sweden, and Constance Nina, daughter of Colonel and Mrs Thomas Baring, of Westhay, Devon.

Mr M.B. Robinson and Miss S.R.L. Cowell
The engagement is announced between Michael, son of Mr and Mrs Timothy Robinson, of Boston and Maine, USA, and Sophia, daughter of Mr and Mrs Adrian Cowell, of Hatfield Peverel, Essex.

Mr L.F.C. Sinclair and Miss A.R. Carlson
The engagement is announced between Lindsay, son of Mr and Mrs Iain Sinclair, of North Mymms, Hertfordshire, and Amelia, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs Jeremy Carlson, of Hackford, Norfolk.

Mr J.S. Titford and Ms H. Flockton
The marriage will take place at Shirland Parish Church, near Alfreton, Derbyshire, on Saturday, May 1, between John Stuart, son of the late Mr and Mrs Sidney Titford, of Woodside Park, North Finchley, and Heather, daughter of the late Mr Roy Flockton and of Mrs Flockton, of Borrowash, Derby.

Crufts Show results

Day 1

Gundog group
Brittany: SH CH Foscott Hautain, Mr and Mrs P Green, Northampton
German wirehead pointer: Kimmax Kool Dude, Mr C Boniface, Bedington, Wirral
Irish red and white setter: SH CH Drumgarron Jewelled Crown of Castlefenny, Mrs E White, Wells, Somerset
Italian Spinone: Kevardhu Afyna, Miss P Longstaff, Sidmouth, Devon.
Retriever (curly coated): SH CH Gladrags Jack The Lad, Mr and Mrs N Titley, Shrewsbury, Shropshire.
Spaniel (Irish water): SH CH Zanfi Burning Bridges at Foulby, Mrs A Williams, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.
Hungarian vizla: SH CH Kazval Keats, Mr M Armstrong, Carlisle, Cumbria
Retriever (Chesapeake Bay): Arnac Bay Jetsam, Mrs C Mayhew, Midhurst, West Sussex.
Spaniel (American cocker): SH CH Kaplars Kritics Choice II of Cosalta, Mrs L Swigciski, Wellinborough, Northants.
Spaniel (field): SH CH Nadavin Elegance, Mr and Mrs C Holgate, Colne, Lancs.
Weimaraner: SH CH Ansona Perdy, Mr G Haran, Lanarkshire.
English setter: Llinlow Vision of Wonder, Mrs J Barber, Redditch, Worcestershire.
German short-haired pointer: SH CH Barleyarch Piccadilly, Mrs S Harris, Warrington, Cheshire.
Hungarian wire-haired vizla: Lanspar Veros Verese, Mrs G Pearson, Bishop Auckland, County Durham.
Large Munsterlander: CH Ghylltbeck Holcus, Mr R Hargreaves, Preston, Lancs.
Spaniel (clumber): SH CH Tresaufield To Hot To Handle, Mr & Mrs T Field, Norwich, Norfolk.
Spaniel (cocker): Glenbrows Raincloud, Mr T Harrison, Derby. Spaniel (Sussex): SH CH Patchingall Clarissa, Chelmsford Mrs C Mitchell, Chelmsford, Essex.
Retriever (flat-coated): Spera Sapphire Vivace, Mrs S De Robbio, Dunblane, Perthshire.
Retriever (golden) Lindjan Rhyme or Reason, Mr J Buckingham, Dawlish, Exeter.
Retriever (labrador) SH CH Carramer Carmen Miranda, Mr & Mrs M Reynolds, Nottingham.
Spaniel (English springer): SH CH Elinvek Earthbound, Mr J Davidson, Kirkcaldy, Fife.
Spaniel (Welsh springer): SH CH Northey Silver Cameo from Zamberlan, Mrs J Hopkins, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk.
Gordon setter: Florcott Am Grantach, Mr & Mrs I Hill, Eastlothian.
Irish setter: SH CH Caspians Intrepid, Mrs J Lorrimer, Bingley, West Yorkshire.
Pointer: SH CH Adstock Jacobite, Mrs K MacDougal, Norwich, Norfolk.

Further results from Crufts will appear in *The Times* on Monday

PERSONAL COLUMN

Do not plot harm against your neighbour, who lives trustfully near you. Proverbs 3.29 (NIV).

BIRTHS

BLAIR - On 9th March to Catherine (née Hyde) and Andrew, a beautiful daughter, Anna Caitlin, a sister for Ellie.

BRUNETTE - On March 6th at The Portland Hospital, to Debbie and Ian, a daughter, Nicole Jennifer.

GAZE - On 5th March at Royal Hampshire Hospital, Winchester to Letty (née Azis) and Christian, a daughter, Augusta, a sister for Milo and Caspar.

GREALLY - On March 8th at The Royal Free Hospital, to Susan (née Fitzpatrick) and Barry, a son, Hugo Christopher Horace, a brother for Oliver and Teddy.

HANSLEY - On March 10th 1999 in Manchester, to David and Deborah (née Chaisty), a son, Matthew James. Grandchild for Maria and Brian of Urmston and Margaret and Jack of Saxilby. Cousin for Harvey, Theo and William.

HARRISON DALY - On Thursday February 11th at 7.05pm to Brenda (née Daly) and Mark, a son, Matthew Thomas. Welcome to the world.

MACKENZIE - Iain and Linnie are delighted to announce the birth of their daughter Amy Madeleine, a sister for Rebecca, on March 10th 1999 in Hong Kong.

MORRIS - On 8th March in London, to Caroline (née Sykes) and James, a son, Toby Alun Ben, a brother for Max and Oliver.

PEMBERTON-PIGOTT - On March 7th 1999 at The Stirling Royal, to Kirsty (née Pitts) and Jeremy, a daughter, India May.

REID - On Monday, March 8th, to Elizabeth (née Bathurst) and Simon, a son, George, a brother for Imogen.

RICE - On March 6th at The Portland Hospital, to Derica and Robin, twin boys, Isaiah and Malachi, brothers for Solomon.

RIVETT-CARNAC - On March 6th to Sarah (née Petrie) and Simon, a son, Geordie James Ian, a brother for Tom.

SEFCHICK - On March 7th at The Portland Hospital, to Shawn and Michael, a daughter, Madeline Grace.

DEATHS

ADAMSON - Durham, formerly of Bow School. Peacefully in hospital on 11th March aged 87 years, Mary, widow of the late Charlie Adamson. Funeral at St Oswald's Church, Durham, 12.30 pm Thursday 18th March.

BADDELEY - Allan Beresford, on March 10th 1999 in his 90th year, peacefully at home. Beloved husband of Rouwen and father of Rozanne, Paul and John. Family flowers only. Donations to The Red Cross. Enquiries, E White & Son 01823 272183.

BAILEY - David, Naval Architect (NPL & BMT), lifelong Portsmouth F.C. and Hampshire C.C. supporter, peacefully at Weybridge Hospital on 6th March 1999. Gorgeous old chap, much loved and missed by his wife Audrey, daughters Ruth and Imogen, sister Eva, friends and extended family. Funeral at 3.00pm on Friday 19th March 1999 at St Mary's Church, Walton-on-Thames. Family flowers only. Donations, if desired, to nominated family charities c/o FW Chitty, 26 Brassey House, New Zealand Avenue, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey KT12 1QD. Enquiries 01932 254255.

BATES - J.H. (Joe). Beloved husband of Nancy and loving uncle and great-uncle, on 9th March peacefully at Trewiston Lodge, Trebetherick, aged 88. Service of Thanksgiving Friday 19th March, St Minver Parish Church 2.30 pm. Family flowers only and no letters please. Donations if desired to St Francis Home for Animals, Porth, Newquay.

BELL - Geoffrey Laurence died peacefully on February 28th 1999 at Our Lady's Hospice, Dublin, aged 83. Enquiries phone 01895 273699. Donations to Cancer Research.

BRADBURY - Catherine, née Keefe. Suddenly in Chelmsford, Essex. Beloved wife to the late Jim Bradbury and step-mother to Peter. Adored granny to Chloe and Sophia. Requiem Mass at the Church of the Sacred Heart, Cobham, Surrey at 11.00am Friday 19th March followed by private interment at Cobham Cemetery. Family flowers only please.

BUTCHART - Michael Denholm Leonard aged 59 peacefully on March 11th 1999. Beloved husband of Jenny, much loved father of Andrew, Charlotte and James, son of Joan and brother of Virginia. Funeral at St Mary's and St Nicholas, Leatherhead, Surrey at 3 pm on March 18th. Family flowers only please but donations if desired to Royal Marsden Hospital, Sutton. Enquiries to Hawkins & Sons (01372) 372435.

CROSS - Nesta Rosamund (formerly Bromley-Martin, née Bevan), aged 87, peacefully on March 6th. Beloved wife of the late Graham, much loved mother of Christopher, Joanna and the late Sally and step-mother of Roger, Trevor and the late Neil, devoted grandmother and great-grandmother. Family burial. Requiem Mass at 2.00pm on Tuesday March 16th at St Joseph's Catholic Church, Bishops Stortford. Family flowers only, but donations if desired to Cheshire Homes, c/o Gordon Barber Funeral Home, 317 Aylsham Road, Norwich NR3 2AB.

ELVERSON - Robin, on March 7th in Houston, Texas.

GARLAND - Sidney Leonard Gattrall MC: on 8th March at home in Guildford, suddenly, aged 83. Beloved husband of Jean, 'Granpops' will be sorely missed by seventeen grandchildren and all his extended family. Quiet family cremation. A Thanksgiving Service will be held at Holy Trinity Church, Guildford, on Sunday April 11th at 2pm to which friends are warmly welcome. Family flowers only. Donations if preferred to National Advertising Benevolent Society, 32 Wigmore Street, London W1H 9DF.

GEDDES - Constance Mary (Kit), on 10th March 1999, suddenly but peacefully at St George's Hospital, Tooting, following a road accident, widow of Lt. Col. James Geddes R.A. and mother of Gordon, Andrew, and Bruce. Requiem at St Thomas Aquinas Church, Ham Common, 11.30, followed by cremation at Mortlake Crematorium, 13.00, on Tuesday 16th March. Family flowers only, donations if wished to Princess Alice Hospice, Westend Lane, Esher, Surrey.

GLANVILLE - Maynooth, Eire. March 3rd 1999, Michael Paul, Surg Cdr RN (rtd). Husband of Patricia and father of Teresa.

GOLD - Eileen (née Mitchell) SRN CMB OND died on 11th March. Beloved wife of Eddie and wonderful mother of Neil. Funeral Service at the Church of St Peter and St Paul, Weston-in-Gordano, Somerset on Thursday, 18th March at 2 pm. Flowers if wished to F.H. Halliday & Son, 115 High Street, Portishead.

GRIFFITHS - Joseph Reginald. Reg Griffiths, dearly loved by all his family and friends, died at 8.50 am in Falkirk Royal Infirmary on 5th March 1999 aged 84 years. He had suffered a stroke and had put up a strong dignified fight to regain his health before suffering a final setback. Beloved husband to Agnes, much loved father to Anne and Roger and caring grandfather to Sophie and Lucy. He was a warm, kind, joyous man who will be dearly missed. His funeral took place at 9.30 am 10th March 1999 at Tulliallan and Kincardine Parish Church and thereafter at Falkirk Crematorium.

HENDRIE - On March 9th peacefully in his sleep James Ian, beloved husband of Doris, devoted father to Meriel and Paul and a much loved grandfather to Lucy and Barney. Funeral at Randalls Park Crematorium, Leatherhead, Wednesday March 17th at 3 pm. Family flowers only please. Donations if desired to Parkinson's Disease Society c/o F.W. Paine, 108 High Street, Esher, Surrey KT10 9QJ.

HERINGTON - Jessica Margaret on March 9th, widow of Sydney, peacefully at home. Funeral at Letheringsett Church March 16th at 2.30pm. Enquiries to Peter Taylor Funeral Service, Holt, Norfolk. Tel: (01263) 711992.

JONES - Donald George died suddenly but peacefully at Ashford Hospital Middlesex on Sunday 7th March 1999 aged 68 years. Dearly loved husband of Libby and loving father of Karen, Alison and Lucy. Dear brother of Jean and Pamela. A much loved grandfather and uncle. Chairman of D.G. Jones and Partners. Sadly missed by family, friends and colleagues. Memorial service at York House, Twickenham on Thursday 18th March at 4 pm. All welcome. Flowers and enquiries to F.W. Paine, Twickenham, tel: 0181 892 1784.

LAIRD - Peacefully on 11th March 1999 at the Western General Hospital, Edinburgh, after a long struggle against illness, Michael Donald Laird O.B.E. A much loved man, dear brother, husband and father; proud grandfather of Freya, Hector, Tam and Matilda. Funeral at Mortonhall Crematorium, Edinburgh, Main Chapel on Thursday 18th March at 11.00am at which all friends are welcome. A book of condolence will be available, no cards or letters please. Any donations would be welcomed by the Diabetic Research Fund at Western General Hospital, Crewe Road South, Edinburgh.

LEGGATE - James R, DSO of Burton-in-Wirral, Cheshire, 10th March 1999, aged 86 years. Much loved husband of Jean and loving father, grandfather and great-grandfather. Service and interment at St Nicholas' Church, Burton-in-Wirral on Wednesday 17th March at 12 noon. Family flowers only please, but donations in lieu may be sent for The Stroke Association (Prenton) c/o Charles Stephens Funeral Directors, Clifton House, 215 Bebington Road, Rock Ferry, Wirral L42 4QA. Tel 0151 645 4396.

LOCKYER - Francis Harding peacefully at home on 8th March, aged 88. Beloved husband of Hermione and father of Barnaby, Jolyon and Romilly. Thanksgiving service at noon Thursday 18th March, St Laurence Church, Seale. If wished donations to The National Kidney Research Fund, Huntingdon. Enquiries to 01252 711444.

MACLEOD - Margaret of Hopping Lane, Canonbury, peacefully on 5th March aged 93. Only daughter of the late Sir Norman and Lady Macleod and dear aunt of Brigid and great-aunt of Brooke. Funeral Tuesday 16th March, Golders Green East Chapel, Hoop Lane, NW11 at 3.15 pm. Enquiries to William Beckett Funeral Directors of 29 Junction Road, N19, tel: (0171) 272-4114.

MONCKTON - Anthony Nelson, passed away in Kato Paphos, Cyprus, on Tuesday March 9th. Burial will take place at Dhekelia British Military Cemetery on Tuesday March 16th. A Memorial Service in England will be announced at a later date.

NICKSON - John, on 10th March, peacefully at Chipping Norton. Devoted husband of the late Pam, loving father of Simon, Jeremy and Ceci, and adored grandfather. Wonderfully cared for at Southerndown Nursing Home. Funeral service to be held at St Nicholas, Chadlington, Oxfordshire at 11.30 am on Saturday 20th March. Family flowers only but donations to The Injured Jockeys' Fund c/o Didcock Funeral Service, Cemetery Lodge, Chipping Norton, Oxon OX7 5XS.

PEACOCK - Frederick George "Pat" on 9th March peacefully at St Thomas' Hospital, aged 89 years. Beloved husband of the late Evelyn. Formerly Deputy Chairman of the Carlton Club, a Past Master of the Worshipful Company of Fletchers and a former Justice of the Peace. Funeral Service at 2.30pm on Monday 22nd March at the South London Crematorium, Rowan Road, London SW16. No flowers please, but if desired, donations to Leukaemia Research Fund, 43 Great Ormond Street, London WC1N 3JJ.

To place death notices, acknowledgements or notices please call 0171 680 6880

RICHARDS - Suddenly on 8th March 1999, of Dolgellau, Gwynedd, aged 78 years. Lt Cdr R.N. (Retired) VL J.P. Richard Meredyth (Nick), beloved husband of Pamela, a dear father and grandfather. Funeral service for family and the local community only at St Mark's Church, Brithdir on Monday, 15th March at 2.30pm. No flowers. Donations in lieu gratefully received towards the R.N.L.I. (Local Branch) c/o Glyn Rees & Son, Funeral Directors, Dinas Mawddwy, Machynlleth, Powys, SY20 9JD. Tel: 01650 531240 or Dolgellau Tel: 01341 422322.

ROBERTSON - James Simpson of Clanfield, Oxon on March 10th 1999. Husband of Margery, father of Liz, John and Kath. Funeral service at Oxford Crematorium on Thursday 18th March at 12 noon. No flowers. Donations for the Pain Relief Clinic at the Churchill Hospital, c/o E Taylor & Son, 21 Corbett Road, Carterton, Oxon OX18 3LG.

SHEPPARD - Monique Helene, died peacefully at Trinity Hospice March 7th 1999; much loved wife of Wing Commander R.F. Sheppard, beloved mother of Patricia, Francesca and John, mother-in-law of Jerry and David and meme of Dominique, Danielle, John, Jason, Michael and Hazel. Cremated in private. Donations if desired to Trinity Hospice, London SW4 0RN.

SHERIFFE - Peacefully at her home in Leicestershire on March 11th 1999 Monica aged 95 years. A much loved and respected friend. Cremation private. Memorial Service will be held at Goadby Marwood Church on Tuesday 16th March at Noon. Donations to her memory for The Injured Jockeys Fund.

SHIELDS - Lorna (née Murgatroyd) on March 10th peacefully at Dorking aged 85. Wife of the late Major General Ronnie Shields and dear mother of Robert and Jane.

TARKOWSKI - Janek Wojciech passed away peacefully at home on March 5th 1999 aged 58 after a bravely fought illness. He will be sadly missed by his loving wife Linda, devoted sons Jan 16 and Marek 14, family and many friends. The funeral service will take place at Brompton Oratory on March 17th at 11 am, burial at Gunnersbury Cemetery 1 pm to which all his friends are respectfully invited. Flowers and enquiries to W.S. Bond on: 0181 994 0277.

TURNER - Joan. On 9th March 1999 at Sutton Veny House Nursing Home in her 90th year. Wife of the late Bruce Turner and mother of Thomas and Jane. Funeral Service at All Saints Church, Sutton Mandeville on Friday 19th March at 2.30 pm. Flowers welcome or donations if desired to R.S.P.B. c/o F. Curtis and Son, 11 Portway, Warminster, Wilts. BA12 8QC.

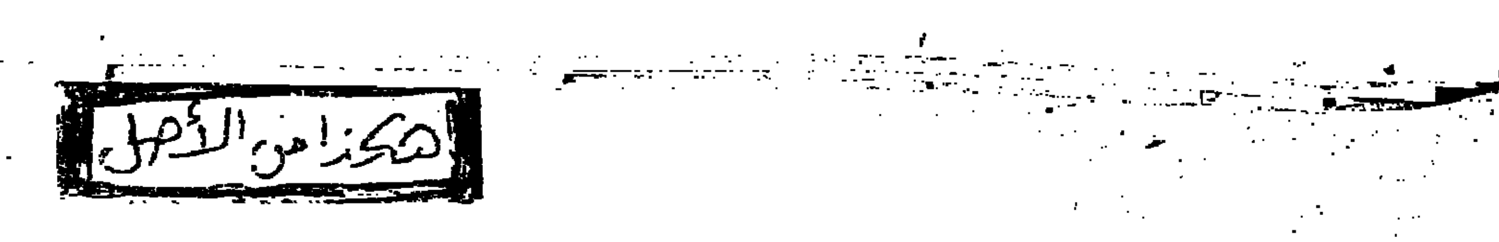
TUSON - Sheila Mary - peacefully on Monday 8th March 1999. After a long illness bravely borne. Beloved wife of Tony and much loved by family and friends. Service and cremation at Putney Vale Crematorium at 2.30 pm on Wednesday 17th March. Family flowers only please.

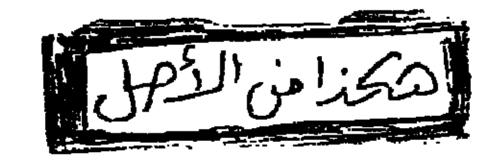
MEMORIAL SERVICES

LINDGREN - A service of celebration for the life of Mark Lindgren will be held in the Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Alban at 2.30pm on Friday 19th March 1999. All family, friends, acquaintances and colleagues are welcome. Family flowers only, but donations, if desired, for the Mark Lindgren Memorial Fund should be sent to: Boodle Hatfield EJH/PES, Solicitors, 61 Brook Street, London W1Y 2BL.

IN MEMORIAM - WAR

THOMPSON - Commander Charles Graham Thompson RN, reported missing 12th March 1943. Always in my heart. E.





SIDNEY GOTTLIEB

Sidney Gottlieb, CIA scientist, died on March 7 aged 80. He was born on August 3, 1918.

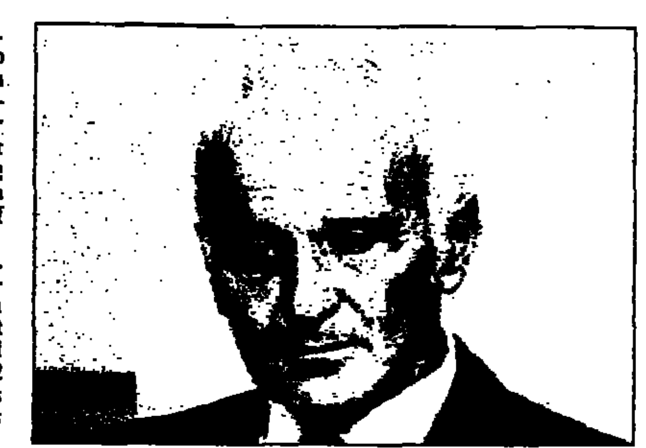
When Churchill spoke of a world "made darker by the dark lights of perverted science" he was referring to the revolting experiments conducted on human beings by Nazi doctors in the concentration camps. But his remarks might with equal justice have been applied to the activities of the CIA's Sidney Gottlieb, who used LSD and other mind-controlling drugs on a host of unwitting subjects in the quest for a formula for winning the Cold War without recourse to arms.

Over a period of twenty years from the 1950s to the 1970s mental patients, prisoners, drug addicts, prostitutes, the clients of prostitutes and even the agency's own employees were unwittingly experimented on with drugs. At least one "participant" in these tests died. Others went insane or suffered other forms of irreversible psychological damage. Indeed, what Gottlieb and his CIA henchmen did was only in degree different from the activities which had sent a number of Nazi scientists to the gallows at Nuremberg in 1946.

The ghastliness of the CIA experiment is, perhaps, mitigated only by the fact that in the end it rebounded on the agency and its paranoid leadership. For by introducing America to lysergic acid diethylamide as one of the main planks of his programme, Gottlieb created the LSD generation: quietist, pacifist, anti-authoritarian and, above all, violently anti-Vietnam War. And the supreme irony of his programme was that the American armies which fought that conflict were in a substantial degree undermined by the very drugs with which Gottlieb had intended to brainwash America's enemies and break their morale. As the Russians were to discover a generation later in Afghanistan, it is a characteristic of "no-win" wars fought for dubious ideological aims that they tend to expose young soldiers to drug abuse as an escape from the horrors of their situation.

The mind-altering drugs, which also included marijuana and mescal, were never in fact used to any effect against important Soviet targets. And at his retirement in 1972 Gottlieb was to dismiss his entire effort for the CIA as "useless".

However, drugs were not Gottlieb's only weapon against the CIA's enemies. He was also involved in assassination plots which at this distance read like something out of a Jacobean revenge play. Thus, there was to be a poisoned handkerchief to kill the Iraqi military dictator, General Kassem. Toxic gifts were to be offered to the Cuban leader, Fidel Castro.



Gottlieb in 1977 after he had retired from the CIA

An assassination kit, complete with needles, rubber gloves, gauze masks and lethal biological materials, was designed to make away with Congo's Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba. None of these plots achieved its aim: the Congolese opposition to Lumumba killed him before the agency could execute its plan.

Another imaginative idea masterminded by Gottlieb was a series of CIA brothels, set up in San Francisco in the 1960s and operated for eight years. The idea was that a cross-section of the American people from all social levels might be lured into these houses where prostitutes would slip them drugs, after which, through two-way mirrors, CIA agents would observe their behaviour. Decor and mood were created with scrupulous care. Bedrooms had sultry crimson soft furnishings and their walls were tastefully adorned with reproductions of Toulouse Lautrec paintings and posters. But although hundreds of unsuspecting punters were drugged during this period it was never at all clear what benefit to American security was yielded by this fantastic and voyeuristic idea.

Gottlieb was the son of Jewish immigrants from Hungary. He himself was to flirt with almost every religion. He took a degree in chemistry at the University of Wisconsin and a doctorate in biochemistry at the California Institute of Technology. A club foot kept him out of the war but he got his chance to serve his country in 1951 when he joined the CIA.

Within two years he was made head of the CIA's technical services division and put in charge of the newly-established department MKUltra. Its remit was to develop mind-controlling drugs for use against the Soviet bloc.

Gottlieb discovered LSD early on. Apart from administering it to others he was an enthusiastic recreational user himself, going on hundreds of acid "trips" during his years with the CIA. After his retirement from the agency he was awarded the Distinguished Intelligence Medal for his patriotic services — but the CIA was careful to destroy most of the records of the work MKUltra had done.

Nevertheless, in the mid-1970s his name emerged into the public domain when he was asked to testify before a Senate committee which was investigating the extent of the CIA's secret experiments. Although his appeal to the committee to have his name taken out of its report was granted, newspapers had already disclosed his identity. Subsequently John D. Marks's book *The Search for the 'Manchurian Candidate': The CIA and Mind Control* (1979), gave a full account of MKUltra's activities, coming to the simultaneous conclusions that Gottlieb was "unquestionably a patriot", but that his work "clearly violated the Nuremberg standards".

After retiring from the CIA, Gottlieb turned his back on his destructive past and devoted himself to healing. With his wife Margaret, who was a missionary's daughter, he ran a leprosy hospital in northern India for 18 months. On their return to the US the couple bought a small farm in northern Virginia, near the Blue Ridge Mountains. There they lived quietly, indulging themselves in their twin pastimes of folk dancing and goat herding. Latterly they had both worked in a hospice, tending the terminally ill.

Sidney Gottlieb is survived by Margaret, and by two sons and two daughters.

RAY BROCK

Ray Brock, MBE, wine-maker, chemist, businessman and racing driver, died on February 14 aged 91. He was born on August 19, 1907.

RAY BROCK was a research chemist who helped in the development of colour film, one of the fathers of the modern British wine industry, and a man with a passion for speed. He brought irrepressible energy to all his enterprises, some of it anarchically misdirected.

Raymond Barrington Brock was educated at Eastbourne College and London University, where he took a degree in chemistry and physics. In recognition of his various research projects, he was later made a Fellow of the Royal Institute of Chemistry.

Between the wars his love affair with speed and things mechanical was nurtured by racing motorcycles at Brooklands. He was also offered the use of a works Levis to ride in the Ulster TT. He was not sure how to get it to Northern Ireland until his cousin offered the use of his Delage car. The two of them then managed to strap the Levis to the front mudguard, and despite raised police eyebrows they drove all the way, peering through the windscreen over the bike.

During the General Strike he drove a London bus, and in 1931 he won himself flying lessons as first prize in a competition run by *Tatler*. He duly qualified as a private pilot in 1932. He also shot at Bisley,



Ray Brock in unusually stately mode, driving the Cannstadt Daimler at Beaulieu

and commentated at Brooklands, Crystal Palace and Donnington. In what time he could spare from these hobbies, he worked as a research chemist in the photographic industry, with the Imperial Dry Plate Company, Ilford Photographic and Dufaycolour.

During the war he was Chief Air Raid Warden for the City of London, for which he was appointed MBE and made a Freeman of the City. But living in Croydon during the Blitz proved dangerous, and when Brock and his wife lost the roof of their house in 1941, they moved to Oxted.

Missing the delights of imported fruits during rationing, Brock decided to try growing peaches (against purpose-built walls) and table grapes (under special glass cloches which he helped to develop). Investigating vine varieties, he discovered several that were suitable only for wine, so he planted a wine vineyard and appealed to the Royal Horticultural Society members to send him cuttings. He also sought varieties from France and Germany, just months after the war.

As his meticulous garden diaries show, the first experimental vines were planted out in March 1946 and, aided by a full-time gardener, Brock established what was initially called the Beebrock Vineyard and later became the Oxted Viticultural Research Station. For almost 30 years and at his own expense, he worked at this, almost inadvertently laying the foundations for what is now a 2,250-acre industry.

More than 600 different cultivars of vines were given trials for suitability; accurate records were kept of the sugar and acid levels and the ripening dates achieved, and this data was assembled and published in four little books. On a strictly non-commercial basis, he also made wines — red and white, still and sparkling — and in latter years experimented with distillation, producing extremely palatable brandy.

Together with *The Grape Vine in England* by Edward Hyams, Brock's booklets prompted Major-General Sir Guy Salisbury-Jones to plant the first modern British vineyard at Hambledon in 1951. This was followed by Jack Ward's Horam Manor vineyard in 1953 (using cuttings from Oxted) and Gore-Browne's Beaulieu in 1958. These became the backbone of the fledgeling English wine industry.

Brock was by now a director of Townson & Mercer Ltd, a firm of scientific instrument makers, and he became president of the Scientific Instrument Makers Association in 1957. But he was also involved in motor racing in the early postwar period, holding the lap record at Goodwood for a sports car of up to two litres in 1948. He twice drove an HRG sports car in the Spa 24-hours race, and having designed and built his own streamlined body for the car, he was third in his class in 1948 and second in 1949.

Brock subsequently abandoned track racing for Swiss hill-climbs, firstly in a special Healey, again designed and built by himself, and then in a works Jowett Javelin. This inspired him to build a complete car to his own design, with a Javelin engine which was to be capable of 100 mph and 50 mpg. The resulting rear-engined coupé was extremely advanced for the time.

At the age of 50 he tried the Cresta run and was co-opted into the British bobsleigh team as brakeman, but he lost his enthusiasm for that abruptly when they had a bad crash and he broke several ribs. He also took up yachting, designing a number of fittings, particularly related to the engine for the yachts he acquired. He went on to design and construct a steam launch, *Silencia*, on which he often took friends of all ages for Sunday picnics. Being somewhat jerry-built, the vessel's fuel pipe was wont to burst, at which Brock would produce a disreputable handkerchief and swat out the flames.

His later business interests included owning a colour printing works, a Renault franchise and a computer firm, when computers were still in their infancy. He maintained his interest in cars into his eighties, and was instrumental in the recommissioning of the National Motor Museum's 1898 Cannstadt Daimler. Subsequently — "to keep my mind active" — he helped to restore a number of classic vehicles. His last venture, still to be completed, is a steam cycle car.

He married Rosemary Spicer in 1933, and she survives him. There are no children.

TOM BAISTOW

Tom Baistow, journalist, died on March 8 aged 84. He was born on July 13, 1914.

TOM BAISTOW was an all-round journalist of the old school. For more than a decade he was deputy editor of the *New Statesman*, but that was merely the culmination of a long and varied newspaper career.

Enoch Thomas Baistow was born in Glasgow and educated in his native Scotland, though part of his childhood was spent in western Canada. He left school at the age of 14 to become a copyboy on the Scottish *Daily Express*, where his father worked as a compositor. Resolving early on that he wanted to be on the editorial side of the paper, he started writing captions for photographs, subbing "shorts" and making himself generally useful in the newsroom. By the age of 17 he had moved to Manchester to become the "splash sub" on the old *Daily Sketch* and a few years later he transferred to the *News Chronicle* as its northern picture editor.

In the war he was commissioned into the Royal Tank Regiment, seeing action as a tank commander in North Africa, Normandy (where he landed on D-Day), Belgium, Holland and Germany. Though he returned to his old job on the *News Chronicle* in Manchester, he was restive at first and thought of emigrating to Israel, where his wife, whom he had married in 1938, had family connections. Instead, however, he accepted a job as deputy features editor of the *News Chronicle* at its London headquarters in Bouverie Street.

He spent the next dozen years on that paper, being successively features editor and then foreign editor, abandoning ship only when the *News Chronicle* was scuttled by the Cadbury family in October 1960. He was father of the journalists' chapel at the time and fought hard to secure the best deal he could for all those who were thrown out of work so abruptly (the paper was still selling a million copies a day at the time it was closed down along with its stablemate, the London evening paper, the *Star*).

Baistow had many close friends in Bouverie Street, including the columnist James Cameron, the diplomatic correspondent William Forrest, and, perhaps above all, the cartoonist, Vicky, who killed himself in 1966.

Throughout his career Baistow had shopped on the left-hand side of the street, so it was appropriate that his enforced next move was to the old TUC paper, the *Daily Herald*, where he became a special feature writer. In 1964 the *Herald* was transmogrified into the Hugh Cudlipp *Sun*, and as an old-fashioned socialist (indeed, in the 1930s, an undercover member of the Communist Party) Baistow never felt entirely at home on the only paper to be "born in the age in which we live".

Accordingly, in 1965 he accepted with alacrity an invitation from Paul Johnson to join the staff of the *New Statesman*, which was then selling more than 90,000 copies a week and at the peak of its circulation success. Very soon he was appointed deputy editor and, in production terms, became the kingpin of the entire enterprise. He also wrote a highly respected press column of his own (at first under the pseudonym Magnus Turnstile). He was a neat writer, and it was perhaps a pity that his preoccupation each week with bringing the paper out meant that only occasionally did he get the chance of deploying his literary talents to the full.

He worked at the *Statesman* for three successive editors, Paul Johnson, Richard Crossman and Anthony Howard, and served as acting editor for substantial periods when the first two were absent through ill-health. He never tried to become editor himself, being content with the role of sage counsellor.

He left in 1976, taking a job as press officer (and part-time lecturer) at the new School of Journalism at City University, as well as writing a press commentary for *The Guardian* and broadcasting frequently, notably on LBC. In 1985 he produced an excellent and concise guide to modern newspaper history entitled *Fourth-Rate Estate*, and from his favourite vantage point at the Savile Club he never lost his interest in what was going on in the world of communications.

For all his left-wing leanings he had a highly pragmatic streak, which led to his placarding his Orpington home with Labour posters during at least three general elections before going off quietly to vote Liberal as the only effective way to keep out the Tory. To his younger, more romantic colleagues, he was never anything but a shrewd exemplar of commonsense.

He leaves his widow, Mae, to whom he had been married for 60 years, and their son and daughter.

CECIL MORLEY

Cecil Morley, CBE, former Secretary-General of the Stock Exchange, died on February 14 aged 87. He was born on May 20, 1911.

WHEN Cecil Morley joined the Stock Exchange, its role was simply to enable investors to buy or sell shares and companies to raise capital. The value of an investment depended on the rate of return and security of the capital, but the process of investment was slow.

As a result, new procedures were adopted to produce quick settlements, an effect of which is that today's violent fluctuations in prices show little relation to investment value. Morley felt that he had spent 22 years refitting the Ark.

Cecil Denis Morley was born in Pembrokeshire. He was educated at Clifton College and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he read law, and in 1935 he qualified as a solicitor.

He then joined the staff of the Stock Exchange, assisting in the share and loan department, which was responsible for the admission of companies to the London market. In 1938 Morley joined the Territorial Army, and throughout the war he was employed on anti-aircraft operations, rising to the rank of major.

In 1949 he was appointed Secretary of the Stock Exchange, which was embarking on a modernisation programme. The first improvement was in public relations and hospitality. The next step involved the creation of a compensation fund to protect clients. This in turn led to the supervision of member firms' accounts, and finally to the examination of candidates for membership.The first steps were also taken for the rebuilding of the Stock Exchange and for the settlement of dealings by mechanical means.

In all of these operations Morley was much engaged. He became Secretary-General of the Stock Exchange in 1965, and was appointed CBE in 1967. He retired in 1971.

In 1936 he married Lily Florence Younge. She died in 1992, but he is survived by their son.

FRENCH PAPERS

PARIS, March 5.

IT IS said, that on the occasion of the Empress's lying in, sums of money will be distributed to pay the child-bed expenses of poor parents, and to redeem effects pawned at the *Mont de Pieté*. The acts of munificence of the same kind, ordered upon the announcing of the Empress's pregnancy, had for their object the relief of a great many poor inhabitants of Paris. Relief was administered at their houses to 2,166; the child-bed expenses of 2,062 families were defrayed; the sums received by 14,401 debtors of the *Mont de Pieté* were repaid; and the effects given in pawn have been restored to those who deposited them.

The small apartments looking into the Palace-court of the Tuilleries, which were lately occupied by the Grand Marshal, have been united to the apartments of the Empress, and will be occupied by the infant on its birth, and by the persons attached to its service.

We are assured, that at the moment so impatiently expected by all the French, and which must crown their dearest wishes, the birth of a Prince will be announced by 101 discharges of cannon, and the birth of a girl by 21. These salutes will be repeated by the artillery of all the fortresses of France and all the ports, of the vessels in the roads, and all places abroad occupied by the armies . . .

ON THIS DAY

March 12, 1811

This column of assorted news from France was culled from the French papers, some of it several weeks old to judge by the datelines. The Monts de Pieté were charitable pawnshops.

The privateer the *Duke of Dantzic*, which sailed from the river of Nantz on the 8th of October, 1810, entered it on the 26th of February. On the 20th of November it captured, in the Sombrero passage, the English brig *Ceres*, from Martinique, which was recaptured off the river of Bourdeaux. On the 3rd of December it took, on the same station, the English brig *Bonetta*, from Guadaloupe, with colonial produce. It also took off the entrance of the gulf of Mexico, the American brig *Canton*, bound to Liverpool, laden with 1,275 bags of cotton. In the same latitude it took the English brig *Jane*, from Savannah to Liverpool, with 700 bags of cotton.

In the course of its cruise it sunk a number of other ships of no value. This privateer was often chased by frigates and corvettes in different latitudes, and experienced five storms. In the last, on the 5th of February, it was obliged to throw its guns overboard.

CHERBOURG, Feb 23

The English sloop *Tryal*, of Weymouth, of about 20 tons, today entered this port, captured by the privateers *Loup Marin* and *l'Epervier*. This vessel was in ballast.

L'ORIENT, Feb 23

An English prize, named the *Pelteisses*, was wrecked on the 16th instant, on the coast of Belleisle; her lading consisted of cotton, peltry, Campeachy wood, acajou, and guyac. The greater part of her cargo is expected to be saved.

Thirteen French sailors on board the prize were saved, together with 3 English prisoners. The *Pelteisses* was about 200 tons, and was on her voyage from Providence Island to London, when she was captured by the privateer *Rodeur* of Bordeaux.

NEWS

Euro up as Lafontaine goes

■ Europe was plunged into confusion as the German Finance Minister Oskar Lafontaine resigned after a fierce cabinet row with the Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder. The news of the departure of a man decried by *The Sun* as "the most dangerous man in Europe" was greeted with barely concealed glee in Downing Street and on international markets. Herr Lafontaine, only a few months in office, had made himself into Britain's bugbear by pushing hard for tax harmonisation........Pages 1, 15

Al Fayed brother wins passport

■ The brother of Mohamed Al Fayed won his six-year battle to get a UK passport, opening the way for the Harrods chairman himself. In giving his brother, Ali Fayed, his passport, Mr Straw ruled that a government report branding the brothers as liars was no longer relevant to the applications........Pages 1, 5

Oldest ancestor
Fossil hunters revealed the skull of what they said could be mammals' earliest ancestor: a creature which lived 250 million years ago beside an inland sea in what is now South Africa........Page 1

Farm subsidy row
The European Union settled the outline of a radical reform tofarm subsidies but Britain and France said that the deal needed more work........Pages 1, 13

Schools turmoil
The first privatisation of an education authority moved a step closer with the resignation of the Chief Executive of Hackney, in East London........Page 2

Paedophile inquiry
Detectives have reopened their inquiries into the deaths of two children after 29 years to see if they were the victims of paedophiles. Police have exhumed the body of an 11-year-old girl........Page 3

Clegg is cleared
Paratrooper Lee Clegg was acquitted of the 1990 murder of a Belfast joyrider despite being branded a liar by the judge........Page 6

Wembley result
Wembley Stadium was sold for £103 million to a consortium backed by the Football Association. The ground will be demolished and rebuilt........Page 8

Goodbye Argentina
The Prince of Wales left Argentina with the feeling that he had become a pawn in the country's internal politics as it moves towards an l election........Page 9

Cancer screening
Routine breast cancer screening in Britain is now as good as the high standards reached in the clinical trials that led to it being introduced ten years ago....Page 11

Peers rebellion
Hereditary peers have received an extraordinary call to rise up in rebellion against the Bill which would expel them from the House of Lords........Page 14

Doctor guilty
An anaesthetisttwho has been pilloried in Zimbabwe as a latter-day version of Josef Mengele had his conviction for causing the deaths of two children confirmed by the Supreme Court....Page 17

Guatemala apology
President Clinton has apologised for a dark and long-buried episode of America's foreign policy: its support for right-wing governments in Guatemala........Page 18

Clinton doubts
With Monica Lewinsky refusing to leave the headlines and accusations about past infidelities, President Clinton's marriage was reported to be under strain Page 19

Close your eyes and think of Kubrick

■ The first scenes from *Eyes Wide Shut*, the final film made by Stanley Kubrick, were released and promptly judged too explicit to be shown on television. Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman are seen having sex in front of a mirror in the 90-second trailer that the film director made to show to cinema owners. The movie has been almost three years in the making........Page 3



IAN HODGSON/REUTERS

Heidi and Kindy relax with Kim Innes between obedience events at Crufts in the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, yesterday

BUSINESS

M&G bid: Prudential, the UK's biggest insurance company launched an agreed bid for the fund manager, after a year of talks........Page 27

Euro gains: The euro staged a remarkable recovery as markets reacted with undisguised glee to the news that Oskar Lafontaine had resigned........Page 27

Mirror report: The Government is coming under pressure to publish a potentially explosive report into the 1991 flotation of Mirror Group Newspapers, after the High Court ruled that investigations of Kevin Maxwell are unfair........Page 27

Markets: The FTSE 100 rose 94.20 to 6335.7. The pound fell 0.07 cents to $1.6265 but rose 0.72p against the euro to 66.60p. The g index rose to 103.5 from 102.7........Page 30

SPORT

Football: The Premier League chief executive, Peter Leaver, and chairman, Sir John Quinton, resigned in the wake of controversy about the award of television consultancy contracts........Page 52

Boxing: The World Boxing Council is not happy with the appointment of Arthur Mercante Jr as referee for the bout between Lennox Lewis and Evander Holyfield........Page 52

Rugby union: Four players and six administrative staff have been released by Richmond in a first wave of redundancies aimed at cutting costs........Page 49

Golf: Mark James, the Europe Ryder Cup captain, had a first-round 67 to put himself in joint second place with 11 others in the Turespaña Masters........Page 49

Bad sports: "London seems destined to play reluctant host to one public-building fiasco every decade, doesn't it?" Richard Morrison on the Battle of Wembley..Page 35

On stage: In London Amanda Harris takes on a role Cocteau originally wrote for Edith Piaf; and Hugh Leonard's new play opens in Dublin........Page 35

Foot-tappers: The choreographer Richard Alston brings his dance company to the South Bank as part of a national tour that underlines his importance........Page 36

Friday pop: David Sinclair reviews the new albums by Blur and Beth Orton among others and assesses the threat to record sales posed by fans downloading from the Internet........Page 37

Menacing: "There is a peculiar air of menace — militancy even — about the build-up to March 14." Mother's Day bothers Jane Shilling........Page 20

Separate development: A year after appearing in a documentary about parenthood the model Betti Romani and her partner Sebastian Vince still live apart........Page 21

Joe Joseph: Tried Harold Pinter's bolognese sauce or Noel Coward's pancakes? How great writers cook the books........Page 21

Troubled tales: People affected by the Troubles are telling their stories on Radio Ulster........Page 38

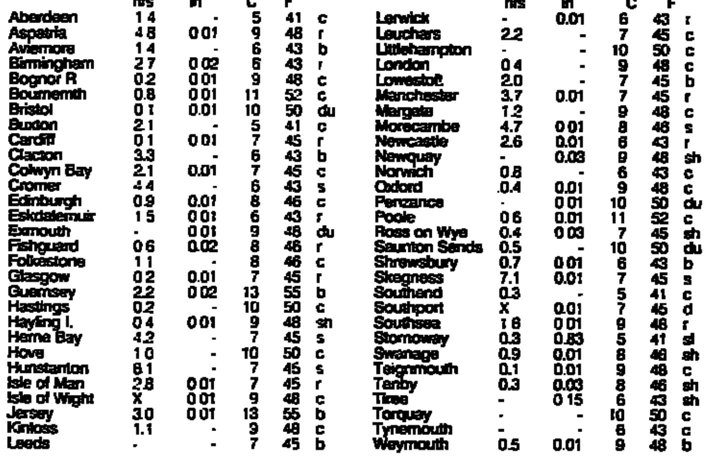
Moneyspinner: What will be the next coup by Claudia Rosencrantz who brought us *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*........Page 39

Testing: A preview of the new national curriculum tests for ages 7 and 11........Page 42

Over-studied: Some students are spending more time studying than is good for their results........Page 43

It is a bad time for Congress to debate whether the US should send troops to help police any peace reached in Kosovo. But there is no better time left

— *The Washington Post*



RADIO & TV

Preview: *Comic Relief:* The fun starts with Lenny Henry and Denise van Outen (BBC1, 7pm) **Review:** Paul Hoggart finds the most expensive object in history....Pages 50, 51

OPINION

Kingmaker's head

Lafontaine stunned all Germany by resigning from his post as Finance Minister and leader of the Social Democrats. But he is unlikely to remain a quiet ghost........Page 23

The CAP still grows

Yesterday's stitched-together bargain on the reform of common agricultural policy will neither solve the EU's immediate budgetary problems nor meet the challenges of EU enlargement........Page 23

Dinner plate battle

As Prince Charles tucks in Uruguay may take pride that this is not the first time that they have served the British well........Page 23

COLUMNS

SIMON JENKINS

Most speeches in my experience are read, "because I can't do it better". In which case, don't speak. The implication is that the audience has come merely for the pleasure of gazing on the speaker's face, as he reads what could be read far faster on its own........Page 22

GEORGE BRIDGES

Britain's education system is guilty of institutional incompetence, not racism. More than one in five adults, whatever their colour, can barely read a timetable.... Page 22

PHILIP HOWARD

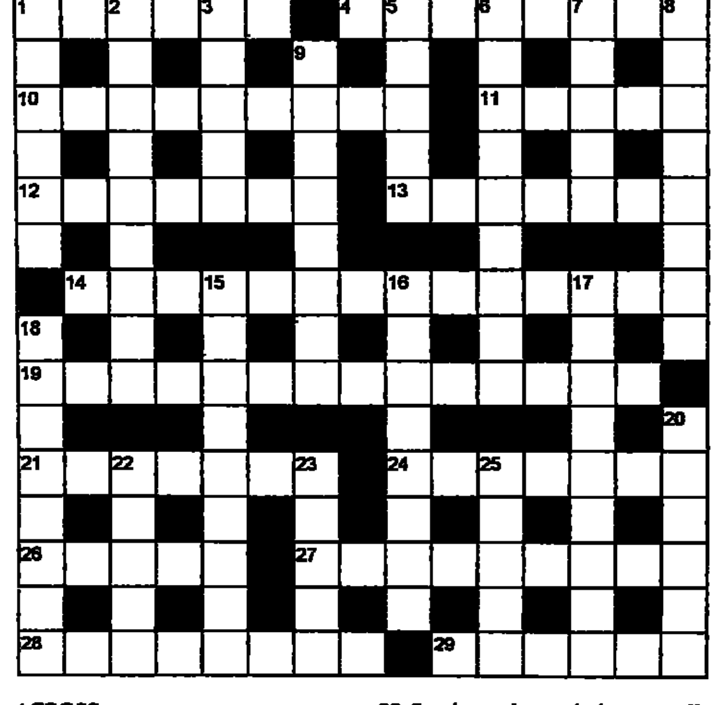
The Government has not yet thought through the literary and linguistic consequences of getting rid of the pound. To have Shylock insisting on his bond of 0.45359 kilograms of flesh will not fit into an iambic pentameter........ — Page 22

Sidney Gottlieb, CIA scientist; **Ray Brock**, winemaker, businessman and racing driver; **Tom Balstow**, journalist........Page 25

Budget; America's and global power; right to roam........Page 23

8, 18, 27, 32, 36, 49. Bonus: 46

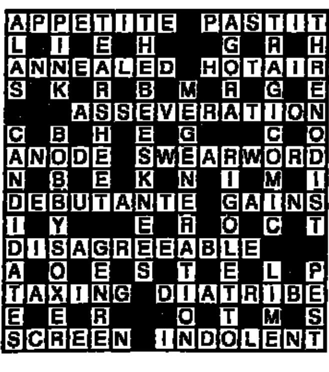
THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 21,049



ACROSS
1 Flag officer (6).
4 It carried Scandinavian forces and desires with it (8).
10 Initially keep member of Jamaican cult inside (3,1,5).
11 Cycle about (5).
12 Fancy drink put forward (7).
13 Puzzling expression of grief at 5-0 (7).
14 Save from drowning someone out of his depth (4,3,2,5).
19 Lack of appreciation unless great fun is arranged (14).
21 Dairy product used in apricot tart... (7).
24 ... cooked, then, can be delightful (7).
26 Bear's not right to invest like this (5).
27 He's been given prescription containing iodine, going by the book (9).
28 Southern vineyard given very little inspection (8).
29 Villain beginning to wisecrack and gag (6).

DOWN
1 Inconsiderate, but not initially mischievous (6).
2 Lad has to remove cover from fish (9).
3 American private doctor introducing singular gadget (5).
5 Prefer one Conservative measure for local consumption (5).
6 Wrong year, wrong ploy at Twickenham (9).
7 Frequent answer received during investigation (5).
8 Cosmetic treatment – price due to be revised (8).
9 Alternative to husky man unable to talk (8).
15 Deep as emotions chap experienced about creative work (9).
16 Plenty to cry about formerly? On the contrary! (8).
17 Will try to get the last word, and thereby put end to argument (9).
18 Periods for which accommodation is required (8).
20 The way irritating sensation can become pain (6).
22 Having caught fish on river, get a drink (5).
23 A professional needs new stage part (5).
25 Can't always predict exact result when starting escapade (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 21,048



Times Two Crossword, page 52

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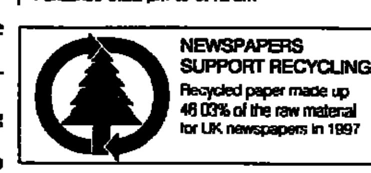
HOURS OF DARKNESS

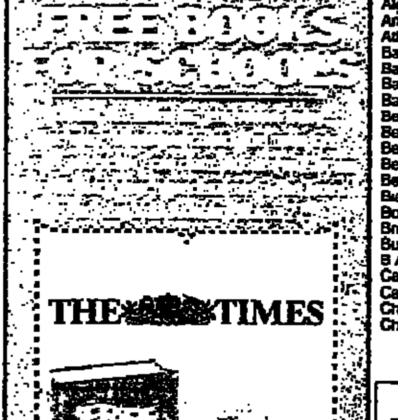
Sun rises: 6.22 am — Sun sets: 5.59 pm

Moon sets: 12.01 pm — Moon rises: 3.16 am

New moon March 17

London 5.59 pm to 6.20 am
Bristol 6.09 pm to 6.30 am
Edinburgh 6.09 pm to 6.35 am
Manchester 6.07 pm to 6.30 am
Penzance 6.21 pm to 6.41 am





FORECAST

☐ **General:** England and Wales will become quite mild with sunny spells, but the south-east will stay dull. Most of Scotland and Northern Ireland will be windy with frequent showers

☐ **London, SE England, E Anglia, E Midlands:** mild but dull with light rain, brightening slowly. Light SW wind. Max 13C (55F).

☐ **Centl S England, W Midlands, Channel Islands:** dull at first, then sunny spells. Light SW breeze. Max 13C (55F).

☐ **SW, NW, Cent N England, S&N Wales, Lakes, IoM:** early rain, then sunny spells and isolated showers later. Light SW wind. Max 12C (45F).

☐ **E, NE England:** early rain, then sunny spells. Moderate SW wind. Max 11C (52F).

☐ **Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, Aberdeen, Moray Firth:** showers in north, some sun in south. Fresh SW wind. Max 10C (50F).

☐ **SW, NE, NW Scotland, Glasgow, Cent Highlands, Argyll:** sunny spells but risk of showers by afternoon. Fresh SW wind. Max 9C (48F).

☐ **Orkney, Shetland:** showers. Strong S wind. Max 8C (46F).

☐ **N Ireland:** sunny spells in south and east but showers in north and west. Light to moderate SW wind. Max 10C (50F).

☐ **Republic of Ireland:** showers. Wind SW, moderate or fresh. Max 10C (50F).

☐ **Outlook:** rain may linger in the south-east early tomorrow but most of the country will be mild with sunny spells.

AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

24 hrs to 5 pm: b=bright, c=cloud, d=drizzle, ds=dust storm; du=dull; f=fair; fg=fog; g=gales; h=hail; r=rain, sh=shower; sl=sleet; s=sun; t=thunder

	Sun hrs	Rain in	Max C	Max F			Sun hrs	Rain in	Max C	Max F	
Aberdeen	1.4	-	5	41	c	Lerwick	-	0.01	6	43	r
Aspatria	4.8	0.01	9	48	r	Leuchars	2.2	-	7	45	c
Aviemore	1.4	-	6	43	b	Littlehampton	-	-	10	50	c
Birmingham	2.7	0.02	6	43	r	London	0.4	-	9	48	c
Bognor R	0.2	0.01	9	48	c	Lowestoft	2.0	-	7	45	b
Bournemth	0.8	0.01	11	52	c	Manchester	3.7	0.01	7	45	r
Bristol	0.1	0.01	10	50	du	Margate	1.2	-	9	48	c
Buxton	2.1	-	5	41	c	Morecambe	4.7	0.01	8	46	s
Cardiff	0.1	0.01	7	45	r	Newcastle	2.6	0.01	6	43	r
Clacton	3.3	-	6	43	b	Newquay	-	0.03	9	48	sh
Colwyn Bay	2.1	0.01	7	45	c	Norwich	0.8	-	6	43	c
Cromer	4.4	-	6	43	s	Oxford	.0.4	0.01	9	48	c
Edinburgh	0.9	0.01	8	46	c	Penzance	-	0.01	10	50	du
Eskdalemuir	1.5	0.01	6	43	r	Poole	0.6	0.01	11	52	c
Exmouth	-	0.01	9	48	du	Ross on Wye	0.4	0.03	7	45	sh
Fishguard	0.6	0.02	8	46	r	Saunton Sands	0.5	-	10	50	du
Folkestone	1.1	-	8	46	c	Shrewsbury	0.7	0.01	6	43	b
Glasgow	0.2	0.01	7	45	r	Skegness	7.1	0.01	7	45	s
Guernsey	2.2	0.02	13	55	b	Southend	0.3	-	5	41	c
Hastings	0.2	-	10	50	c	Southport	X	0.01	7	45	d
Hayling I.	0.4	0.01	9	48	sh	Southsea	1.6	0.01	9	48	r
Herne Bay	4.2	-	7	45	s	Stornoway	0.3	0.83	5	41	sl
Hove	1.0	-	10	50	c	Swanage	0.9	0.01	8	46	sh
Hunstanton	8.1	-	7	45	s	Teignmouth	0.1	0.01	9	48	c
Isle of Man	2.8	0.01	7	45	r	Tenby	0.3	0.03	8	46	sh
Isle of Wight	X	0.01	9	48	c	Tiree	-	0.15	6	43	sh
Jersey	3.0	0.01	13	55	b	Torquay	-	-	10	50	c
Kinloss	1.1	-	9	48	c	Tynemouth	-	-	6	43	c
Leeds	-	-	7	45	b	Weymouth	0.5	0.01	9	48	b

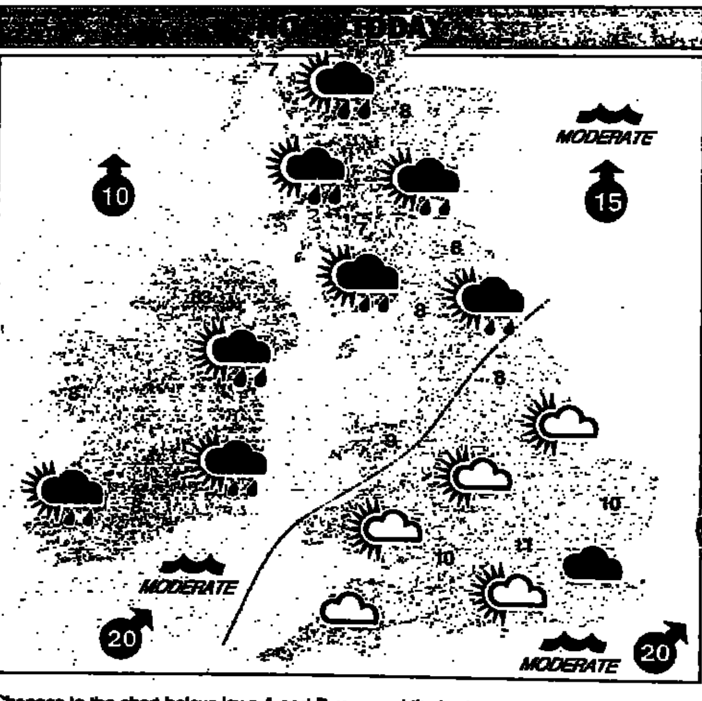
Yesterday: highest day max — Jersey, 13C (55F); lowest day max — Drumalbin, South Lanarkshire, 4C (39F); most rain — Stornoway, 0,83in; most sun — Skegness, 7.1hr

ABROAD

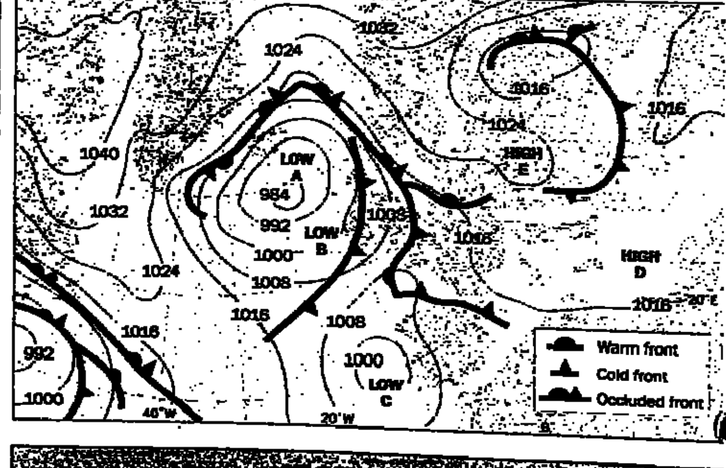
	C	F			C	F			C	F			C	F	
Ajaccio	20	68	s	Cologne	7	45	l	Madrid	15	59	s	R'nldsway	7	45	s
Akrotiri	17	63	s	C'phagn	1	34	sl	Majorca	18	64	s	Salzburg	14	57	s
Alex'dria	18	64	s	Corfu	15	59	s	Malaga	16	61	s	S Frisco	9	48	s
Algiers	25	77	f	Dublin	5	41	r	Malta	16	61	s	Santiago	29	84	s
Amst'dm	4	39	d	Dubrovnik	13	55	s	Melbourne	19	66	c	S Paulo	X		
Athens	17	63	s	Faro	18	64	s	Mexico C	22	72	s	Seoul	7	45	c
Bahrain	25	77	s	Florence	14	57	c	Miami	23	73	s	Singapore	32	90	f
Bangkok	35	95	s	Frankfurt	6	43	r	Milan	9	48	c	Stockholm	-3	27	c
Barbados	28	82	f	Funchal	19	66	s	Montreal	-5	23	s	Strasb'rg	8	46	c
Barcelona	16	61	f	Geneva	13	55	c	Moscow	-6	21	s	Sydney	24	75	s
Beijing	3	37	s	Gibraltar	17	63	f	Munich	14	57	s	Tangier	19	66	f
Beirut	17	63	f	Helsinki	-4	25	c	Naples	18	64	s	Tel Aviv	17	63	f
Belgrade	17	63	s	Hong K	21	70	c	N Delhi	26	79	s	Tenerife	21	70	d
Berlin	8	46	c	Innsbruck	13	55	f	N York	1	34	f	Tokyo	7	45	f
Bermuda	14	57	f	Istanbul	11	52	s	Nice	15	59	s	Toronto	-4	25	f
Biarritz	20	68	s	Jeddah	30	86	s	Oslo	-4	25	c	Tunis	21	70	s
Bordeaux	19	66	s	Jo'burg	28	82	s	Paris	8	46	c	Valencia	X		
Brussels	7	45	c	L Palmas	22	72	s	Perth	30	86	s	Vanc'ver	7	45	c
Budapest	14	57	s	Le Touqt	8	46	f	Prague	6	43	r	Venice	11	52	f
B Aires	26	79	s	Lisbon	14	57	c	Reykjavik	0	32	s	Vienna	13	55	f
Cairo	20	68	s	Locarno	7	45	c	Rhodes	17	63	s	Warsaw	3	37	c
Cape Tn	34	93	s	L Angeles	11	52	r	Rio de J	28	82	f	Wash'ton	-3	27	s
Chicago	-1	30	f	Luxembg	6	43	r	Riyadh	25	77	t	Wel'ngton	20	68	X
Ch'church	17	63	X	Luxor	30	86	f	Rome	15	59	f	Zurich	13	55	c

Temperatures at midday local time on Wednesday X = not available

WEATHER TODAY



Changes to the chart below: lows A and B merge, drift slowly north, and begin to fill; low C slowly fills in situ; high D drifts around with little change, but high E will slowly decline

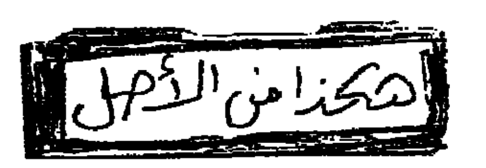


HIGH TIDES

TODAY	AM	HT	PM	HT	TODAY	AM	HT	PM	HT
Aberdeen	8:48	3.3	21:40	3.3	Liverpool	6:16	7.0	19:03	6.9
Avonmouth	1:15	9.2	14:06	9.3	London Bridge	8:38	5.4	21:03	5.5
Belfast	6:17	2.8	18:56	2.8	Lowestoft	4:50	2.0	17:12	2.1
Cardiff	1:01	8.7	13:52	8.7	Margate	6:59	3.7	19:33	3.8
Devonport	0:15	4.3	12:57	4.2	Milford Haven	0:54	4.9	13:36	4.8
Dover	6:06	5.0	18:54	5.0	Newquay	-	-	12:37	4.9
Dublin	7:15	3.2	20:03	3.3	Oban	1:46	2.9	14:18	2.8
Falmouth	-	-	12:28	4.0	Penzance	-	-	12:16	4.0
Greenock	7:06	2.5	19:23	2.4	Portland	0:06	1.2	13:03	1.1
Harwich	6:28	2.9	19:06	2.9	Portsmouth	6:33	3.5	19:27	3.6
Holyhead	5:40	4.2	18:33	4.2	Shoreham	6:03	4.5	18:58	4.4
Hull (Albert D)	1:07	6.7	13:42	6.8	Southampton	6:02	3.6	18:58	3.6
Ilfracombe	0:32	6.5	13:14	6.4	Swansea	1:08	9.8	13:49	9.8
King's Lynn	1:24	4.4	14:06	4.5	Tees	11:07	8.8	23:54	8.8
Leith	9:43	4.2	22:33	4.2	Walton-On-Naze	6:28	3.2	19:01	3.2

All times GMT. Heights in metres.







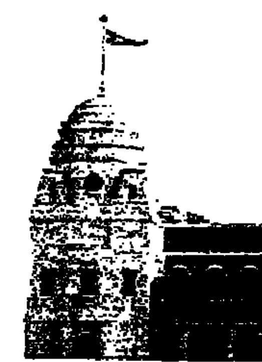
Blur back to best

Arts, page 37

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THE TIMES

2



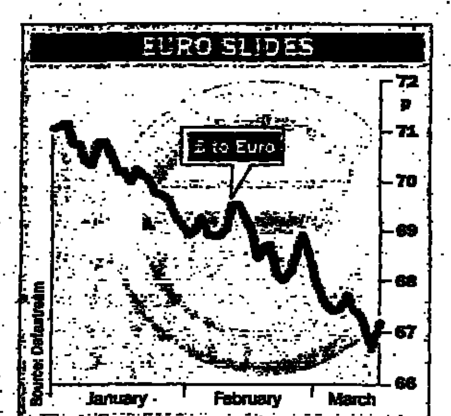
Wembley, what a fiasco

Arts, page 35

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

FRIDAY MARCH 12 1999

Euro revives after Lafontaine resigns



BY ALASDAIR MURRAY
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE euro staged a remarkable recovery yesterday as international markets reacted with undisguised glee to the news that Oskar Lafontaine, the German Finance Minister, had resigned.

Investors quickly concluded that Herr Lafontaine's departure would bring an end to the feuding between the European Central Bank and the German Government which has marred the euro's debut.

The euro, which had traded close to record lows for most of the day, jumped more than two cents against the dollar within minutes of the resignation — climbing from $1.0800 to settle at about $1.1000. The euro also wiped out most of its earlier losses against the pound, climbing back from a record low of 66.45p to reach 67.2p.

Earlier in the day the euro's problems had been thrown into sharp relief by comments made by George Soros, the billionaire speculator. Mr Soros said that the currency would remain under pressure as long as political tensions remained between the European Central Bank and some member states.

Analysts predicted that the resignation would boost the chances of a European rate cut because the ECB would now feel its independence was no longer under threat.

Gwyn Hacche, European economist at HSBC, said: "Lafontaine was persistent in calling on the ECB to cut, and the ECB couldn't be seen as giving into his wishes." But some economists added a note of caution, saying that, until a successor was appointed, huge uncertainties remain. Robin Marshall, head of research at Chase, the investment bank, said: "It doesn't solve the underlying policy issues in euroland, so the danger of pressures between fiscal and monetary policy remains."

European bonds, including British gilts, also climbed higher after the resignation. The news, however, came too late to have any impact on European stock markets, although analysts predicted that European markets would climb higher today on hopes of an ECB rate cut and because of the widespread perception that Herr Lafontaine was anti-business.

Shares in London are also expected to test new highs after setting a record yesterday. The market was buoyed by a strong performance from oil stocks as Opec countries finally moved towards an agreement to cut production. The news sent oil prices climbing and also helped to push Wall Street more than 100 points higher to its own record high. The FTSE 100 index of leading shares closed up 94.2 at 6,335.7, having earlier also touched a record intra-day high of 6,360.3. Shares in BP and Shell, which closed up 9.3 per cent and 8.3 per cent respectively, contributed about 60 points to the FTSE 100's gain. Financial services shares also made strong gains after the surprise Prudential Corporation takeover bid for M&G Group revived hopes of further consolidation in the sector.

Commentary, page 29

The Pru to pay £1.9bn for M&G takeover

BY CAROLINE MERRELL, INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

PRUDENTIAL, Britain's biggest insurer, yesterday paid £1.9 billion in cash to secure M&G, the fund management group, in a bid to consolidate its position in the retail financial services market.

The Pru's cash offer, recommended by the M&G board, values M&G shares at £25, a 40 per cent premium to the previous night's close of £17.87½p. Five months ago, they stood at less than £10.

The takeover, which comes after a year of talking to each other, will enhance Prudential's retail product range and position it for what it believes will be huge growth in the savings and pensions market. The Pru estimates that this market will grow from £160 billion to £420 billion over the next five years.

Pointing to recent government initiatives, which the Pru believes will lead to massive growth in private pensions and personal savings, Sir Peter Davis, Prudential's group chief executive, said: "Our vision is quite clear about the growth in the market for these products."

M&G directors can expect to net about £8 million under the terms of the offer from their own shares, excluding options. Many of the fund manager's 1,000 staff will also benefit.

Sir Peter said he was confident that M&G's directors and managers would remain after the takeover.

The Pru said yesterday that it was not planning extensive job cuts. However, an internal memo leaked from the Pru last night suggested that it plans to trim M&G personnel. The memo says: "There is scope for rationalisation of retail fund administration and of M&G's life and pensions back office."

Under the terms of deal M&G's retail fund management operation, which has more than £10 billion under management, will be merged with Prudential's unit trust division, which has about £3 billion under management. The M&G brand will be kept.

M&G's life and pensions business, which has £3 billion under management, will be joined with Prudential's life and pensions business, while M&G's institutional funds will be put together with Prudential Portfolio Management. M&G has more than 700,000 customers, while Prudential has ten million worldwide.

Sir Peter said the Pru first approached M&G about a year ago. M&G was at that time suffering from a deluge of bad publicity over poor fund performance. Independent financial advisers, its main source of distribution, had been put off selling its products and M&G was forced to implement a series of internal changes to try to tighten up its investment methods and performance.

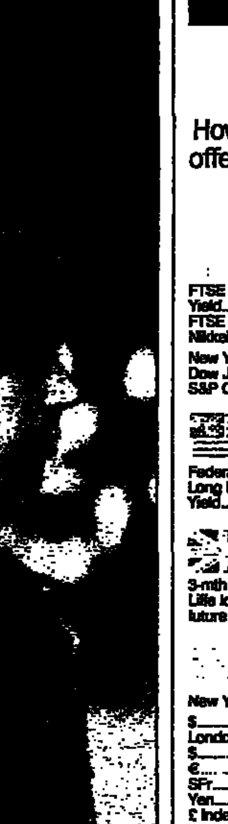
Crucial to the takeover has been the role of the Esmee Fairbairn Charitable Trust, which owns about 33.3 per cent of M&G. The trust was set up by Ian Fairbairn, one of the founder's of M&G. The trust had always been reluctant to sell. John Fairbairn, Ian Fairbairn's nephew and the trust's chairman, said: "We have a continuing regard and a kind of parental attitude to M&G. We think the two companies fit together very well." Fairbairn himself stands to make £11 million from the deal.

Some analysts claimed that Prudential was paying too much for M&G. Thomas Rayner at SG Securities said: "It is a bit of a full price at 10 per cent of M&G's funds under management. M&G is almost all retail business but it is pretty aggressive for a group which has been struggling in terms of performance."

The deal leaves Schroders and Perpetual as the two remaining big quoted independent fund managers in the UK.

GAVIN FOGG





Bob Seelert, head of Saatchi & Saatchi, whose clients include the British Army, paraded a 30 per cent profit rise in the firm's first full year since demerger

Seelert marches ahead

BY RAYMOND SNODDY

SAATCHI & SAATCHI, the advertising group whose clients include the British Army, celebrated its first full year since the demerger from Cordiant with a 30 per cent rise in underlying pre-tax profits to £30.7 million.

Bob Seelert, Saatchi chairman and architect of the demerger, said: "We could have sunk like a stone or flown like a bird. Both companies have done well, but we have got the better numbers."

The companies began separate trading in December 1997 at 110p each. Yesterday Cordiant was unchanged at 164½p, while Saatchi rose 6p to 189½p.

"Shareholders should have a smile on their faces," said Mr Seelert, who is closer than his erstwhile colleagues to his target for a 10 per cent margin in 1999. The Saatchi margin, including income from joint ventures, rose to 9.3 per cent (8.8 per cent) in the year to September.

Saatchi won a record $500 million (£300 million) net new billings in the year and has won a further $200 million so far this year.

The company, which did not pay an interim dividend, has lifted the final payment to 1.4p (1.2p).

Warning hits Reed Elsevier

BY RAYMOND SNODDY, MEDIA EDITOR

SHARES of Reed Elsevier fell sharply yesterday after the Anglo-Dutch information group reported a fall in underlying profits and gave warning that earnings growth would be negligible this year.

The shares fell 51p to a low of 513½p before edging higher to close at 532½p, down 32p on the day. Investors were also concerned by the company's failure to name a new chief executive after a seven-month search.

The position is vacant after Nigel Stapleton's decision to leave the group. Mr Stapleton is currently co-chairman, sharing the role with Herman Bruggink, head of Elsevier, the group's Dutch arm.

Reed Elsevier yesterday said the search had been narrowed to just two candidates from outside the group, and an announcement was possible at the company's annual meeting next month.

The company reported a 6 per cent fall in adjusted pre-tax profits to £773 million in 1998 and the co-chairman said that 1999 "will not be a year of any significant profit growth".

Despite the setback Mr Stapleton said that "looking behind the numbers" there was plenty to give shareholders confidence. The 1998 results had been affected by issues that were unlikely to recur. They included the 2 per cent earnings growth lost through dilution from the sale of IPC Magazines, which netted a £692 million exceptional gain, adverse currency movements and problems with Reed's travel information business.

During the year Reed Elsevier also spent £80 million on new developments including the commercial launch of ScienceDirect, an online data base containing 1,000 scientific journals in electronic form and updates to Lexis-Nexis, the legal and general data base.

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Mirror report pressure grows

BY JON ASHWORTH

THE Government is coming under pressure to publish a potentially explosive report into the 1991 flotation of Mirror Group Newspapers, after the High Court ruled that ongoing investigations of Kevin Maxwell are unfair.

In a ruling handed down yesterday, which raises serious questions about the methods used in Department of Trade and Industry investigations, Sir Richard Scott, the Vice-Chancellor, said DTI inspectors were unreasonable and oppressive in demanding interviews with Mr Maxwell, youngest son of the late publishing tycoon Robert Maxwell. Rejecting the DTI's attempt to commit Mr Maxwell, 39, for contempt, the judge said the inspectors should make use of evidence gathered in previous interviews.

The DTI may now find it hard to resist calls to publish an interim report into the MGN flotation after an investigation in which evidence has been seen or heard from 276 witnesses.

The report threatens serious embarrassment to leading figures in both politics and industry. There have been suggestions that it has been deliberately suppressed. A DTI spokesman said last night: "We hope the judgment will allow the impasse to be resolved and lead to a speedy resolution of the inspectors' inquiry."

Mr Maxwell, who defended himself in court, borrowed £15,000 from friends to pay for legal advice. He is seeking to recover his costs from the DTI. Mr Maxwell said: "The DTI were asking the court to find me in contempt, to send me to prison or fine me £10,000. The judge has said the procedures were oppressive and unfair and there was no requirement for me to answer the questions."

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Canary Wharf chiefs net £6m

BY CARL MORTISHED

TWO Canary Wharf directors will secure an instant gain of about £6 million on flotation if they exercise options granted to them only a year ago.

George Iacobescu, chief executive, and Peter Anderson, finance director, were each granted options over shares, exercisable at a price of 79½p. Canary Wharf yesterday revealed that shares in the flotation would be placed with institutions at a price between 280p and 350p, valuing the company at £1.9 billion to £2.3 billion.

Mr Iacobescu has options over 3.6 million shares and Mr Anderson over a million shares. At the maximum placing price, the net gain for the two men would be more than £12 million, though only half of the options are exercisable immediately.

The *pathfinder* prospectus, published yesterday, also reveals that Paul Reichmann, who founded Canary Wharf, has been issued warrants that will increase his stake from 11 per cent to 15 per cent after the flotation. The warrants are exercisable at a price of 450p.

The flotation price has been struck at the low end of valuation estimates for the company which owns a 4.7 million sq ft office development in London's Docklands. The sponsors appear not to have adopted a discounted cashflow valuation by Hillier Parker and Savills which included future profits and tax breaks pricing the company at £2.6 billion.

The owners, including Mr Reichmann, Prince al-Waleed bin Talal, CNA Financial, Franklin Mutual, the Glick family and interests of Edmond Safra, are not selling shares, but Canary Wharf will raise up to £585 million in new funds.

Canary Wharf is not being sold to private investors; among risk factors cited in the prospectus is the impact of the euro on London's financial market.

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Business Today



Tempting target

How M&G attracted an offer it could not refuse

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STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100	6335.7	(+94.2)
Yield	2.50%	
FTSE All Share	2908.34	(+42.53)
Nikkei	15502.14	(+22.14)
New York:		
Dow Jones	9914.65	(+141.81)*
S&P Composite	1303.39	(+16.55)*

US RATE

Federal Funds	4[illegible]%*	(4[illegible]%)
Long bond	95[illegible]*	(95[illegible])
Yield	5.58%*	(5.58%)

LONDON MONEY

3-mth interbank	5[illegible]%	(5[illegible]%)
Liffe long gilt future (Jun)	116.54	(116.19)

STERLING

New York:		
$	1.6285*	(1.6265)
London:		
$	1.6267	(1.6274)
€	1.5013	(1.4857)
SFr	2.3940	(2.3799)
Yen	195.31	(195.07)
£ Index	103.5	(102.7)

DOLLAR

London:		
€	1.0926*	(1.0946)
SFr	1.4611*	(1.4595)
Yen	119.70*	(119.75)
$ Index	108.6	(108.1)

Tokyo close Yen 119.73

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (May)	$12.70	($12.10)

GOLD

London close	$294.05	($292.75)

* denotes midday trading prices

Exchange rates .... Page 28

Telecom Italia to buy in mobile division

By Carl Mortished
International Business Editor

TELECOM ITALIA plans to buy in its $55 billion mobile telephone associate business, in a massive restructuring aimed at foiling a $58 billion (£36 billion) bid from Olivetti, the ambitious electronics and telecoms conglomerate.

Franco Bernabe, chief executive of the embattled Italian utility, revealed the company's industrial strategy, comprising an offer for the outstanding 40 per cent of TIM, the mobile phone company, disposals of non-core assets, the enfranchisement of its so-called "savings" shares and a share buyback.

The move could scupper the bid by the much smaller Olivetti. Should Telecom Italia succeed in securing approval from its investors at a general meeting on April 16, the enlarged group could be valued at more than $100 billion, well beyond the reach of Olivetti.

Olivetti is only bidding for the ordinary shares of Telecom Italia. By enfranchising the savings shares, which receive dividends but have no vote, Telecom Italia will modernise its share structure and raise the stakes for Olivetti.

Telecom Italia needs investor consent to get approval for the restructuring from Consob, the Italian stock market regulator. However, analysts yesterday said the telephone utility would have little trouble in securing the necessary majority. TIM investors are being offered a premium of about 10 per cent in the offer.

Analysts reckoned that the integration of TIM was overdue as the company risked losing the full benefit of growth in mobile phones. One said: "TIM was spun off to realise its value but telephone companies are seeing more business migrating to mobiles."

In addition, Telecom Italia is launching a share buyback programme for 10 per cent of the equity which will be financed by a €10 billion (£6.6 billion) financing on the capital markets.

Weekend Money website:
http://www.times-money.co.uk

Electra proposes £500m share buyback scheme

By Robert Cole, City Correspondent

ELECTRA Investment Trust, the embattled £1.3 billion venture capital fund, has offered to buy back its own shares at a cost of £544 million.

The offer, worth 786p a share, sets a bid benchmark for 3i, the rival venture capital specialist that wants to buy Electra. 3i's offer of 705p a share was turned down by the Electra board last month. Yesterday 3i said it was "considering its position".

Electra shares yesterday rose 40p to 729½p. The price fell short of the buy-in price because of fears that 3i will be unwilling to match the 786p offer. In addition, Electra will only purchase a maximum of 40 per cent of the stock and doubts are being expressed about the value of Electra shares that will remain in existence after the buy-in is complete.

Electra's board attempted to raise hopes that the underlying value of the trust is greater than 786p.

The 786p offer is equivalent to an updated net asset value published yesterday by Electra. But the board said its valuation policy was conservative. It said a more realistic value, given that past NAVs had underestimated realisable values for unquoted investements, was 915p a share.

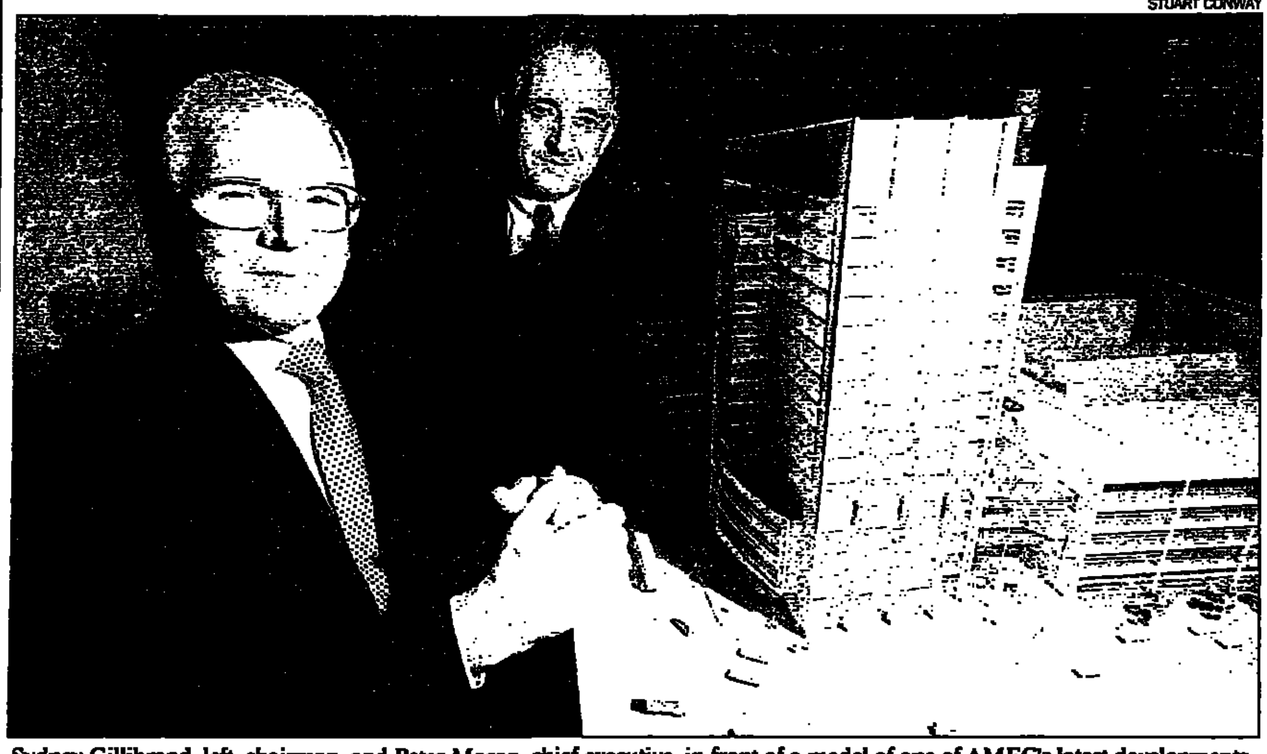
Peter Walls, investment trust analyst at Credit Lyonnais Securities, the stockbroker, said: "The 915p is pie in the sky stuff. People will be concentrating on 786p. That is a credible figure."

Directors yesterday pledged not to apply for shares in the buyback, as Electra attempted to emphasise its belief that the true value of at least 915p would be proved correct. The buyback at 786p is structured as a tender offer. Electra will borrow up to £750 million to fund the purchase.

Yesterday Electra also announced the purchase of the outstanding 50 per cent of Electra Fleming, the fund management company that manages the Electra trust, from Robert Fleming, the investment bank, for £30 million.

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STUART CONWAY



Sydney Gillibrand, left, chairman, and Peter Mason, chief executive, in front of a model of one of AMEC's latest developments

AMEC negotiates better return

By Paul Armstrong

AMEC, the construction group, has started to reap the benefits of its move away from competitive tendering with a 50 per cent jump in profit before tax and exceptionals.

The increase took profit on this basis to £71.4 million for 1998. Profits on asset sales in 1997 meant the result after exceptionals was up just 1.2 per cent at £69.2 million.

The strong growth in negotiated contracts, as opposed to those it tendered for, furthered AMEC's campaign to differentiate itself from the rest of the construction sector. Investors responded by marking up AMEC shares by 12 per cent to 238½p. The stock has run from 155p in the past two months.

Peter Mason, chief executive, said that 60 per cent of the capital project work won by AMEC in the UK last year was negotiated, bringing higher margins. Mr Mason said this was part of the company's strategy to provide a one-stop shop supplying the full range of construction-related services, from finance and design to building ownership and management.

Mr Mason said that there were signs that some European companies wanted new headquarters built on this basis.

Operating profit in the company's capital projects division leapt 117 per cent to £20.6 million, although margins were still low at about 1 per cent. Mr Mason said these were expected to improve as AMEC shifted away from tendering.

AMEC's service businesses recorded a 24 per cent rise in profit to £38.3 million and its order book grew by 18 per cent to £880 million.

This was helped by the low oil price, which has encouraged petroleum companies to outsource much of their work.

A final dividend of 4.15p was declared, taking the year's payout to 6.25p, up 25 per cent.

UB calls for law on labelling GM food

By Fraser Nelson

UNITED BISCUITS, the food company that has just lost its chief executive to EMI, has called for the establishment of an international hallmark system to identify all genetically modified food.

The company, which makes McVitie's biscuits, said that the industry lacks a cast-iron guarantee that it is not buying ingredients derived from genetically modified (GM) crops. It said that, for the past 18 months, it has only used suppliers who say their ingredients are GM-free — but no one has been able to rule out traces of GM food appearing in products.

Eric Nicoli, who is to be replaced by Leslie van de Walle as chief executive, said: "At the moment, we're not required to say anything on the label. We are pushing for legislation to decide a sensible threshold above which GM food would be identified. We think GM food is safe, but if our customers don't want it, we'll try not to give it to them."

UB's underlying profit rose 4 per cent to £110 million for the 52 weeks to January 2. Return on capital employed, which Mr Nicoli sees as the most important measure of its performance, rose by 1.8 points to 18.6 per cent.

After £30.8 million of exceptional items, full pre-tax profit dropped to an expected £79.3 million (£90.4 million). The £150 million share buyback programme lifted earnings per share to 11.5p (11.1p).

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City diary, page 31

Alchemy in hotels deal

ALCHEMY PARTNERS, the venture capitalist, has joined forces with Greenwich NatWest, the global debt markets division of NatWest Group, to launch what is thought to be Europe's first securitisation in the hotel sector. The £52 million securitisation of Paramount Hotels, which Alchemy acquired for £77 million last summer, will allow the company to expand at a time of increasing consolidation.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Asda victory in medicine price war

ASDA scored a significant victory in its campaign to start price wars in the medicine market yesterday after the Office of Fair Trading won approval to hold a hearing into the matter. The Restrictive Practices Court will meet at the end of next year to decide whether to abolish the price-fixing system that allows drug manufacturers to control the price of non-prescription medicine. It will consider Asda's claim that this system represents a health tax that leads to £200 million of overcharging each year. This is countered by small chemists, who believe that 3,000 out of Britain's 12,000 pharmacies will be forced out of business if they have to compete with the supermarkets.

Asda's case was taken up three years ago by John Bridgman, Director-General of Fair Trading, who asked for the matter to be decided by the Restrictive Practices Court three years ago. Mr Bridgman said yesterday: "This is good news for the consumers who have been forced to pay unnecessarily high prices for too long. The court agreed with me that the market has changed in the last 29 years and it is time to look again at whether retail price maintenance is in the public interest." In 1970 it was decided that price-fixing was vital to protect small chemist shops from competing with supermarkets.

BBA meeting on VAT

THE British Bankers Association is to have an urgent meeting with Customs & Excise over changes to the VAT rules in the Budget which apply the tax to the outsourcing of many of the banks' back office functions. The BBA claims the change will cost the banks more than £75 million in extra tax. Leading accountants have pointed out that the change was contrary to the Chancellor's comments in the Budget that he would not be widening the scope of VAT.

Phytopharm trials

PHYTOPHARM, the company developing medicines from plants, is to begin phase II trials of a product thought to have the potential to prevent cancer of the colon. Richard Dixey, chief executive, said: "This might be the *tamoxifen* for colon cancer" — a reference to the controversial Zeneca drug that US researchers believe can prevent women developing breast cancer. Phytopharm shares, up 10½p to 282½p, have multiplied in value six times in 15 months.

BoS targets savers

BANK OF SCOTLAND has become the latest financial services company to exploit the increasing demand for long-term savings by launching its own life assurance, pensions and investments business. Edinburgh Fund Managers will handle investment management for the business on an actively managed basis, while Legal & General will provide index-tracking investment products. The new range of products will be known as the Bank of Scotland Investors Club.

Thomson-CSF pledge

THOMSON-CSF, the French defence electronics group, reported an expected 1998 loss of €232 million (£155 million) but said it would be back in profit this year and promised big gains in operating profit from 2001. The losses arise from exceptional charges taken against restructuring aimed at cutting costs. Operating profits, struck before exceptionals, rose 7 per cent to €355 million. In January Thomson lost to British Aerospace in a bid battle for the Marconi defence electronics subsidiary of GEC.

EBRD stays in Russia

THE European Bank for Reconstruction and Development promised yesterday that it would not quit Russia despite reporting huge year-end losses stemming from the country's financial meltdown. Steven Kaempfer, EBRD vice-president for finance, said the bank was investing for the long term. The EBRD said the Russian collapse had forced it to make provisions of 553.1 million ecus (£390 million), three times higher than the previous year. It reported an overall loss of 261.2 million ecus; operating profits rose.

BT takes £90m stake

BRITISH TELECOM made its first investment in Latin America with a 20 per cent stake in ImpSat, which is valued at £450 million. Sir Peter Bonfield, BT's chief executive, said BT was paying £90 million for its stake as a way of gaining access to big corporate customers in key cities in Brazil, Argentina and Mexico. The company, which has specialised in data, Internet and e-commerce services, will market Concert, BT's international services arm.

Qualceram advances

QUALCERAM, the bathroom furniture supplier based in Wicklow in the Republic of Ireland, said that, while its home market continues to grow, trading conditions in the UK are competitive. In the year to December 31, 1998, group sales rose 21 per cent to Ir£10.6 million (£9 million) and pre-tax profits rose 23 per cent to Ir£2.2 million. Earnings per share increased 18 per cent to Ir14p. The company recommended a final dividend of Ir2.2p per share, lifting the full-year payout 10 per cent to Ir3.3p.

Wyevale enjoys growth

WYEVALE Garden Centres bucked the trend of their retailing cousins on the high street by enjoying an 11.7 per cent like-for-like sales increase at Christmas, which made up for tough trading earlier in the year, induced by the poor weather. Like-for-like sales for 1998 grew by 4.1 per cent though acquisitions during the 12 months swelled sales to £75 million from £63 million. Pre-tax profits edged up 2 per cent to £9.3 million. The final dividend is 3.13p making a total of 7.7p (6.86p).

Hurricane batters Cox Insurance

By Gavin Lumsden

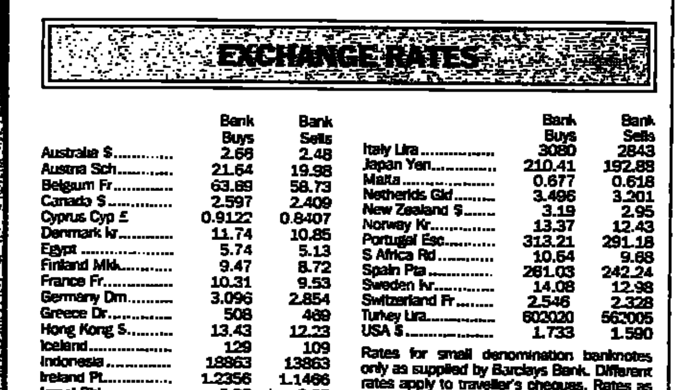
SHARES in Cox Insurance Holdings fell a further 16p to 156½p yesterday after the Lloyd's insurer published final results. This followed a profits warning in December.

Pre-tax profits before the amortisation of goodwill and the cost of buying syndicate capacity fell from £20.4 million in the first nine months of 1997 to £19.8 million for the whole of 1998. Adjusted earnings per share declined from 13.1p to 12.2p for the same periods.

The drop in profits was largely caused by arise in exceptional claims in commercial underwriting. A large claim from a Polish power plant combined with losses arising from Hurricane Georges in the Caribbean and continued losses on American extended warranties.

The company has hired a new chief executive for the commercial business — Stephen Bungay from Boston Consulting. Michael Dawson, chief executive, said the outlook for the commercial business remained tough.

Cox is paying a final dividend of 2.6p, making a year total of 3.5p, which compares with the 3.1p paid for the first nine months of 1997.

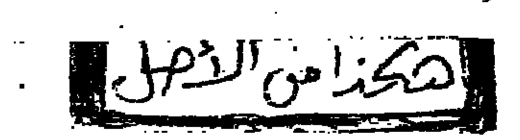


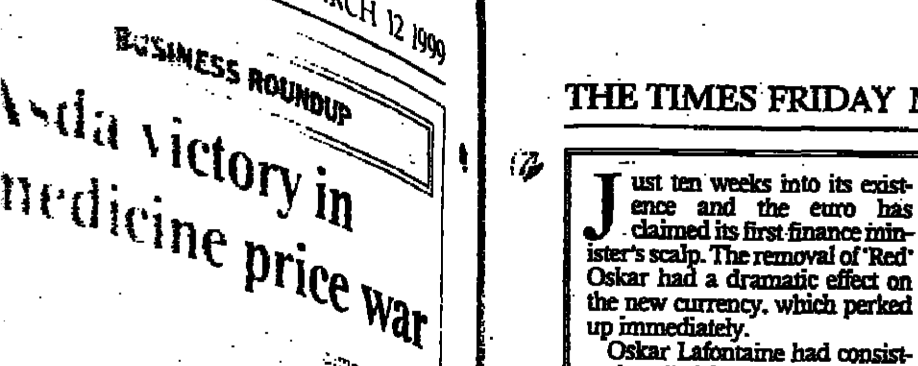
EXCHANGE RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia $	2.66	2.48
Austria Sch	21.64	19.98
Belgium Fr	63.89	58.73
Canada $	2.597	2.409
Cyprus Cyp £	0.9122	0.8407
Denmark Kr	11.74	10.85
Egypt	5.74	5.13
Finland Mkk	9.47	8.72
France Fr	10.31	9.53
Germany Dm	3.096	2.854
Greece Dr	508	469
Hong Kong $	13.43	12.23
Iceland	129	109
Indonesia	18863	13863
Ireland Pt	1.2356	1.1466
Israel Shk	6.89	6.23
Italy Lira	3080	2843
Japan Yen	210.41	192.88
Malta	0.677	0.618
Netherlds Gld	3.496	3.201
New Zealand $	3.19	2.95
Norway Kr	13.37	12.43
Portugal Esc	313.21	291.18
S Africa Rd	10.64	9.68
Spain Pta	261.03	242.24
Sweden Kr	14.08	12.98
Switzerland Fr	2.546	2.328
Turkey Lira	602020	562005
USA $	1.733	1.590

Rates for small denomination banknotes only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.







No tears for this Oskar

COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

Just ten weeks into its existence and the euro has claimed its first finance minister's scalp. The removal of 'Red' Oskar had a dramatic effect on the new currency, which perked up immediately.

Oskar Lafontaine had consistently called for a weak euro and proved exceedingly successful in getting what he wanted. As he ranted on about the need for the European Central Bank to slash interest rates, he did for the euro just what our own dear Clare Short did for the Railtrack flotation price. If both individuals had been swishing black capes and dripping blood from ghoulish grins, they could hardly have scored higher on the fear factor.

The spectre of socialism frightens markets. Ms Short intimated that a new Labour Government would renationalise the railways, so drastically reducing the attractiveness of an investment in the Railtrack privatisation. Lafontaine, who had appeared to be largely in step with Schroeder in the run-up to his election last September, emerged as embarrassingly out of step with Schroeder's centre left coalition.

While Tony Blair has been heading towards Europe, Oskar Lafontaine has played an invaluable role in reminding those who were paying attention of just why it is right to be cautious about signing up to the single currency. The German Finance Minister is rightly concerned about his country's economic plight. Germany's economy shrunk in the last quarter of 1998; its industrial production fell by 7.8 per cent, a rather worse performance than even Japan managed.

Herr Lafontaine's prescribed solution was to hack down interest rates and let spending rip. But one-size solutions do not fit every countries' problems and his demands caused consternation within the EU as well as without. The European Central Bank, as independent as our own Bank in setting interest rates, may have been unmoved by Oskar's lamentations but there were some who feared that, had he been able to, he would have bludgeoned down the ECB door and set the rate himself.

While he was worrying about interest rates, he failed to deliver the tax reforms for which German industry is crying out. The result has been to deter foreign investment from the country and to make some German organisations consider whether they might not be more comfortable headquartered elsewhere.

The head of the Federation of German Industries, Hans-Olaf Henkel, was moved to bleat that "we find ourselves in the difficult situation of having someone who knows nothing about business, who never studied economics, telling us what we should think about business and economics." That is a predicament in which people in many countries can find themselves. As they fully digest Gordon Brown's Budget, many in Britain may sympathise with Herr Kenkel. But they should ask themselves whether they would feel more comfortable with the European version.

Sir Peter sticks to hoarses for courses

Sir Peter Davis was nursing a sore throat yesterday but even his hoarseness could not disguise his delight in his latest acquisition. Not so long ago, Sir Peter thought a bank or a building society would be the perfect complement to his business but good sense has prevailed.

Old-fashioned financial institutions are lumbered with vast property portfolios. With the hugely successful launch of Egg, the Pru has demonstrated that heavy real estate costs are not a prerequisite of a successful financial services business. The banks are struggling to offload their unwanted properties, the demand from breweries intent on opening yet another new drinking establishment to trade under the banner "Counting House" or "The Vaults" having slowed of late.

Today telephone banking is taking a growing share of the market and Internet banking is coming along behind. The mushrooming of automatic telling machines in useful places such as train stations and even — oh, what innovation — in Marks & Spencer stores renders most bank branches redundant.

But M&G brings new products and marketing expertise to the Pru and together they should be able to make the most of the increase in personal saving that they believe inevitable. The Isas and Lisas and stakeholder pensions that are going to rake in the extra cash are not vouchers for heavy profits. The emphasis, underlined by the Chancellor again on Tuesday, is that these new products should be low-cost offerings. With Government intent on taking over from the Consumers' Association, and the FSA set to publish the equivalent of *Which?* guides to personal finance, margins on the new savings and pensions products are going to look a little thin.

The answer, reasons Sir Peter, lies in volume. That is what M&G will bring to the Pru, already digesting Scottish Amicable. Systems will be combined, costs brought down and the result will be a boost to the bottom line.

The M&G name will remain. Rather like the Pru, it seems that its reputation with the public has survived despite some apparent efforts to destroy it. The fund manager did not mis-sell, perhaps, but it did mismanage, and over several years its relative performance slouched.

But Michael McLintock has been striving to rejuvenate the organisation, and there is a feeling in the City that he is winning. Certainly the Pru feels that it is buying M&G when it is "on the turn".

Arnault fashions Gucci coup

While the fashion editors concentrate on hemlines and the extraordinary head-dresses that Alexander McQueen set atop his models, City editors are having much more fun watching the spat between two fashion businesses. The dispute between LVMH and Gucci seems set to outlast Paris Fashion Week and could still be going next season.

The two companies have now agreed that they should do the bidding of the Amsterdam court and start talking about how they could settle their dispute. The two sides seem likely to end up spitting pins at each other. Bernard Arnault, of LVMH, is not about to give up the 34 per cent stake he has acquired in Gucci and Gucci is reluctant to back track on its clever wheeze of diluting his stake by doling out new shares to staff.

But the crafty M Arnault has a record of coming out of such apparent impasses with a victor's smile. If he offers Gucci a solemn undertaking — and they would probably want it in triplicate and witnessed by lawyers — that he would not increase his stake in the business, Gucci would appear churlish if they did not at least listen to his contentions of why LVMH would be able to boost Gucci's profitability.

Both sides are assembling the arguments to demonstrate their cases. Superficially, Gucci's record seems to show that it does not need M Arnault's input. But the man who successfully held the Diageo deal to ransom should not be underestimated.

Straw's law

JACK STRAW says he will not take account of a DTI inspectors' report critical of Mohamed Al Fayed when deciding whether to give him citizenship: too much time has passed since the events of 1986. Mr Straw is following good precedent. It was the City's collective decision to draw a veil over an old DTI report, which said Robert Maxwell was unfit to run a public company, that allowed the late MP to get his hands on all those pension funds. Now the DTI is looking into Maxwell's second coming.

Wassall puts value at twice market price

By Paul Durman

WASSALL, the conglomerate that is reinventing itself as an investment firm, estimated its value at 341p a share yesterday — almost twice its market price.

Chris Miller, chief executive, said: "We are more confident of adding value for shareholders than at any time since the creation of Wassall in the late Eighties."

In October Wassall bought TLG, the Thorn Lighting business, for £363 million, and it has also acquired a 9.3 per cent stake in BICC, the cables group. It was the cables industry that gave Wassall one of its most spectacular past successes, with its investment in General Cable of the US, which produced a £278 million profit.

However, the market has not welcomed the company's attempt to act as a private equity firm. Its shares have collapsed from 381p early last year to only 192p.

The group's existing trading activities — which include DIY sealants, bottle tops and suitcases — maintained annual profits at £32.8 million (£32.1 million) in difficult trading conditions. Wassall said that, after stripping out currency, profits from continuing operations rose 12 per cent.

Pre-tax profits were £25.1 million. The previous year's total was bloated by the gain on General Cable.

A final dividend of 5.5p leaves the total unchanged at 7.8p a share.

Mr Miller said Thorn Lighting "has tremendous potential and already looks like a great acquisition". In the final few months of the year it contributed £7.1 million of profits.

Wassall has embarked on a wide-ranging European reorganisation of Thorn Lighting, and it plans to invest an additional £30 million in it over the next three years.

The group said it still has substantial scope to make further acquisitions.



OM opts for £3bn listing

MEMBERS of Old Mutual, the South African life assurance company, yesterday voted overwhelmingly in favour of shedding its mutual status in favour of a £3 billion share listing in London and Johannesburg (Martin Barow writes).

Old Mutual, which will be ranked fifth among London-listed life assurers, has 3.2 million policyholders, many of whom have never before owned shares. Each will receive a minimum of 200 shares.

It hopes to win a place in the FTSE 100 index following other South African groups such as South African Breweries. Old Mutual bought British stockbrokers Albert E. Sharp and Capel Cure Meyers last year.

Food and drink group says the worst of the Asian economic crisis is over



Spirited performance: Tony Greener, left, chairman of Diageo, and John McGrath, chief executive, reported that the outlook for the company was positive

Diageo remains optimistic

By Dominic Walsh

DIAGEO, the Burger King restaurants to Gordon's gin group, said yesterday that the worst effects of the Asian economic crisis were now behind it and the general outlook was "pretty positive".

In the half-year to December 31, the group's UDV sprits and wine division saw a 19 per cent decline in profits in the region, with volumes down by 30 per cent. However, Phil Yea, finance director, said: "In recent months there has been a marginal improvement, albeit from a lower base."

The Asian crisis, allied to uncertainty in Latin America, were among the factors that contributed to a 12.5 per cent decline in Diageo's profits before tax and exceptionals to £1.05 billion. Some £54 million of profit was lost from the sale of Dewar's whisky and Bombay gin to satisfy regulatory requirements after the merger of Guinness and GrandMet.

However, underlying profits were up 4 per cent on a comparable basis and the group said it had achieved merger savings of £61 million during the period. Earnings per share excluding exceptionals were down 0.5 per cent to 20.5p but the interim dividend has been lifted by 8 per cent to 7.8p.

UDV reported a 4 per cent rise in operating profits to £589 million, with Europe and North America both seeing strong growth. Volumes for its top five brand/market combinations, where the bulk of marketing investment is being chanelled, rose by 3 per cent. Total marketing spend was 16 per cent lower at £334 million. In the UK, Smirnoff vodka, Bell's whisky and Gordon's gin all declined.

Improved marketing at its Guinness brewing arm paid off with a 13 per cent rise in profits to £149 million, with draught Guinness volumes in the UK rising 3 per cent. However, profits at Burger King were flat as the closure of some of its US units counterbalanced a 3.5 per cent rise in same-store sales.

The problems in Pillsbury's North American food business, where intense competition resulted in a 4 per cent volume decline, led to a 3 per cent drop in divisional profits to £263 million, compared with a 14 per cent uplift last year. Mr Yea said one-off factors such as higher cream costs would fade in the second half and trading was expected to improve.

Tempus, page 30

QMH to consider action on debts

By Dominic Walsh

QUEENS MOAT HOUSES, the four-star hotel operator, is actively looking at ways of refinancing part of its £800 million debt mountain, although it is intent on avoiding issuing fresh equity.

The debts have come down from £1.4 billion since QMH was on the brink of collapse in 1993, but a further refinancing of £180 million of senior-term debt was always inevitable before the end of 2000. While issuing new shares is one of the options, the group is considering accessing the European debt markets.

Andrew Coppel, chief executive, said: "The more progress we make, the more options become available. The equity route is not our preferred route and not at these prices. We've spent six years trying to avoid massive shareholder dilution so why start now?"

Queens Moat yesterday reported a 71 per cent jump in profits before tax and exceptionals in 1998 to £33.5 million from like-for-like sales up 6.4 per cent to £375.3 million. Trading profits in the UK rose 11.4 per cent, with room occupancy flat at 73 per cent and average room rates 5.2 per cent higher at £56.31.

Mr Coppel said that its businesses in Germany and The Netherlands had also performed strongly, and would continue to do so in 1999, although growth was slowing in the UK.

The protracted case for wrongful dismissal brought by four former directors, on which a judgment is expected soon, has so far cost the company more than £6 million.

Chorion pays dividend as it returns to profit

By Dominic Walsh

CHORION, the leisure group formerly known as Trocadero, bounced back into the black last year and will pay a dividend for the first time since John Conlan and Nick Tamblyn took the helm in July 1997.

The group reported a pretax profit of £3.02 million compared with a write-down-hit £31.6 million loss in 1997. Earnings per share reached 0.48p compared with a loss per share of 6.80p. Shareholders will get a dividend of 0.1p "reflecting the substantial turnaround in the company's performance and the board's confidence in the future".

The new bars division made a contribution of £2.1 million in the nine months since it was acquired by Chorion, well ahead of expectations.

Its £3 million Tiger Tiger venue, which opened in London's Haymarket in November, has traded so strongly that the group has accelerated plans to roll out the concept. Four new units in London are in the pipeline, and terms have been agreed for sites in Croydon, Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham.

Its intellectual property division, which owns the copyright to the works of Enid Blyton and Agatha Christie, lifted operating profits by 60 per cent to £3.2 million. A further 25 *Noddy in Toyland* programmes are now in production and Chorion has signed an agreement to develop the Noddy brand with BBC Worldwide.

John Lewis adds to retail gloom

By Fraser Nelson

JOHN LEWIS took its turn to give warning about more hard times on the high street yesterday as it returned a 17 per cent decrease in annual profits.

Sir Stuart Hampson, chairman, said the company had been badly hit by a retail downturn that had left its 23 department stores in the "doldrums".

He said: "This is a moment when it is pleasanter to look back than forward. This is a year for taking every week as it comes. I foresee a sticky few months ahead."

Its department store sales were frozen at £1.75 billion for the year to January 30. The 120 Waitrose supermarkets saw sales rise to £1.73 billion (£1.67 billion).

A 3.2 per cent increase in costs left trading profit at £225 million (£272 million) before a £33.5 million VAT refund.

This left £89 million for its staff bonus, which averages at £2,280 per person.

In the next few weeks, John Lewis department stores will start trading at the Bluewater shopping complex in Kent and Glasgow. Two further stores are under construction in Southampton and Solihull.

French trump Amey to bag Servisair

By Paul Armstrong

A FRENCH airport services company has trumped Amey Group's attempted hostile takeover of Servisair, the baggage-handling company.

Servisair said yesterday that it had agreed to a cash offer of 230p a share from Penauille Polyservices, representing a 15 per cent premium to Amey's offer.

Brian Staples, chief executive of Amey, an outsourcing group, said his company would not lift its bid and planned to sell its 2 per cent stake in Servisair to Penauille.

Servisair said Penauille had received irrevocable undertakings to accept the bid from holders of 41.4 per cent of the shares. Brokers for Penauille are understood to have secured another 7 per cent on the stock market yesterday.

Servisair shares closed 24½p higher at 231p.

John Willis, Servisair chairman, said Penauille's £94 million offer was significantly higher than Amey's bid and was fair value.

Penauille's offer represents a 98 per cent premium to the price at which Servisair shares were trading shortly before it revealed in December that it was in takeover talks.

Servisair had rejected Amey's offer on the grounds that it failed to recognise the profit growth that would flow from the company's strong position in European markets.

Mr Willis said Servisair had spoken to several potential bidders in the past two months but added that he did not expect any other offers to emerge.







Pru's bid helps FTSE roar past 6,300 mark

THE clamber for shares on both sides of the Atlantic returned to fast-forward yesterday, sending share prices in London and New York soaring to record highs.

Although prices in the City closed off their best on the day, investors were clearly influenced by the opening gain of 163 points for the Dow Jones industrial average, which resumed its advance on the 10,000 level.

The FTSE 100 index finished 94.2 higher at 6,335.7, after briefly touching a high of 6,360.3. The FTSE 250 index rose 84.3 to 5,493.3, suggesting that investors were still on the lookout for value among quality second-line stocks. A total of 1.3 billion shares changed hands.

Early gains were fuelled by further consolidation in the financial sector after **Prudential Corporation**, whose chief executive is Sir Peter Davis, launched an agreed cash bid of £25 a share for **M&G Group**, up 662½p at £24.50. The deal values the fund management group at £1.9 billion. Prudential was down 16½p at 797½p.

Further consolidation is expected within the sector judging by the gains seen in **Perpetual**, 412½p to £40.42½, **Edinburgh Fund Management**, 42½p to 355p, **Aberdeen Asset Management**, 11½p to 132½p, **Brewin Dolphin**, 20p to 550p, and **Gerrard Group**, 20p to 439p.

The bid for M&G is a reminder that timing is everything. Charles Bauer saw the price of **Amvescap**, where he is a director, climb 27½p to 646½p yesterday, just a day after he sold 443,000 shares at 620p. Fortunately, he still has 47.2 million, or 7 per cent, left. Another director, Gary Crum, also sold 150,000 shares at 620p and a further 250,000 at 665p, and now holds 33.8 million, or 5 per cent.

The banking sector was also thinking about consolidation in the wake of Banque Nationale de Paris's bid for rivals Paribas and Société Générale. **Barclays** climbed 79p to £18.93. Its name has been linked in recent weeks to the Pru. Gains were also seen in **Northern Rock**, 20½p to 542p, **Lloyds TSB**, 40p to 980p, and **NatWest**, 73p to £14.86.

Albright & Wilson held steady at 140½p after results earlier this week. The chemical specialist has a bid on the table of 130p from Albemarle of the US and now the speculators are waiting to see if Rhodia, the French company, will come back with an offer of as much as 180p a share.

Elsewhere in the sector, **Kalon** surged 17½p to 130p on reports that Total of France, the majority shareholder, may bid for the rest of the shares it does not already own.

Laporte was chased up 47½p to 632½p ahead of results on Monday. Profits are likely to be uninspiring but the market will want to see what impact the new management has made.

Scapa rose a further 2¼p to 113½p on revived talk of a bid.

British Fittings advanced 8½p to 113½p after announcing it was in receipt of another bid approach. A management buyout team is said to be ready to make an offer of 118p a share. Speculators say this latest offer could be worth up to 130p a share.

It was the first day of dealings in **Axon Group** after a placing by WestLB Panmure, the broker, at 175p. The IT specialist opened at 205p and touched a high of 263p before settling at 254p, a premium of 79p. Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, the broker, says the group's rating compares favourably with its rivals, such as **Diagonal**, up 2½p at £12.15.

Cortecs finished 1p firmer at 24p despite Glen Travers, a director, selling 100,000 shares. It reduces his total holding to 6.9 million, or 4.37 per cent.

The breakdown in takeover talks left **Jarvis Porter** nursing a loss of 8p at 75p. The paper and packaging specialist now intends to implement its restructuring programme.

Speculative buying hoisted AIM-listed **Stentor** 8p to 26p in thin trading. Talk is that several potential bidders are stalking the shares, having seen the price of the loss-making company slump from a peak of 196½p since last October. Earlier this month, the price was just 6½p.

Servisair continued to gather pace with a jump of 24½p to 231p after finding itself in receipt of an offer worth 230p a share from Penauille, the French group. This tops a bid of 200p a share already on the table from **Amey**, unchanged at 590p.

Yorklyde stood out with a rise of 6p to 57p. It has escaped the levies being imposed on suppliers of cashmere garments by the US Government as part of the banana wars. Sources say the levy applies to suppliers of the garments, rather than those companies that provide the material.

☐ **GILT EDGED:** The bond market saw falls across the yield curve in thin conditions. The resignation of Oskar Lafontaine, the German Finance Minister, came after the close of business in London. But traders say it could prove positive for bonds and equities.

In the futures pit, the June series of the long gilt rose 35p to £116.54 on turnover of 27,000 contracts. In longs, Treasury 8 per cent 2021 rose 67p to £145.55, while Treasury 7 per cent 2002 was 13p better at £106.43.

☐ **NEW YORK:** Oil shares and optimism about the US economy drove the Dow Jones industrial average over the 9,900 mark. By midday the index was up 141.81 at 9,914.65.

CHRIS HARRIS



Jonathan Bloomer, left, Prudential finance director, and Sir Peter Davis saw Pru shares fall after the bid for M&G

CRUDE PRICE

Source: Datastream

FTSE 350 Oil exploration and production price index — FTSE All-share index (rebased)

Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb — 1,000 / 1,500 / 2,000 / 2,500 / 3,000 / 3,500 / 4,000

HOPES are growing that this month's meeting of the Opec oil ministers in Vienna will be able to thrash out a new agreement on production quotas.

Shares of the oil companies have been building up a head of steam in recent weeks convinced that a deal is there to be concluded.

BP Amoco was one of the strongest performers among the top 100 companies with a leap of 92p to £10.21½. Shell also put on 33¾p to 396¾p after moving to obtain permission to buy back 5 per cent of its shares, restructure its downstream gas operations and make disposals. There were also gains for Enterprise Oil, 18½p to 321½p, Cairn Energy, 10p to 114½p, Lasmo, 15p to 135p, Ranger Oil, 20p to 202½p, and Monument Oil & Gas, 4¾p to 42¼p.

Credit Lyonnais, the broker, points to the price of Brent crude at $12 a barrel against $10 in December. Rival broker Credit Suisse First Boston says that Shell and Enterprise will benefit most from any price rise.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):
Dow Jones ....9914.65 (+141.81)
S&P Composite ....1303.39 (+16.55)

Tokyo:
Nikkei Average ....15502.14 (+22.14)

Hong Kong:
Hang Seng ....10662.81 (-86.20)

Amsterdam:
AEX Index ....527.58 (+6.92)

Sydney:
AO ....2950.5 (+19.1)

Frankfurt:
DAX ....4754.41 (+33.00)

Singapore:
Straits ....1471.73 (+2.20)

Brussels:
BEL20 ....3302.18 (+24.64)

Paris:
CAC-40 ....4184.38 (+22.07)

Zurich:
SMI Index ....7322.6 (+113.2)

London:
FT 30 ....3841.5 (+35.4)
FTSE 100 ....6335.7 (+94.2)
FTSE 250 ....5493.3 (+84.3)
FTSE 350 ....3006.9 (+45.0)
FTSE Eurotop 100 ....2914.03 (+60.37)
FTSE All-Share ....2908.34 (+42.53)
FTSE Non Financials ....2934.4 (+37.42)
FTSE Fixed Interest ....153.74 (+0.36)
FTSE Govt Secs ....115.04 (+2.30)
Bargains 98946
SEAQ Volume 1345.9m
US$ ....1.6265 (-0.0007)
Euro ....0.6660 (-0.0072)
£:SDR 1.1745
Exchange Index ....103.5 (+0.8)
Bank of England official close (4pm)
RPI ....163.4 Jan (2.4%) Jan 1987 = 100
RPIX ....161.8 Jan (2.6%) Jan 1987 = 100

RECENT ISSUES

Axon Group	254		...
Close Bros Dev VCT	100		...
Enhanced Zero Trust	100¼	–	¼
Gander Properties	7½		...
Jupiter En Zero Dv Pf	106¾	–	½
Jupiter Enhanced Inc	100	+	¼
Luminar Warrants	275	–	2½
NBA Quantum	110		...
Sports Internet	136½	+	1
Synstar	127	+	1

RIGHTS ISSUES

Brancote n/p (10)	1		...
Oxford Biomedica n/p (15)	3	–	1

MAJOR CHANGES

RISES:

Stock	Close	Chng	Chng%
M & G	2450	+662½	+ 37.0
Creighton	14½	+ 3½	+ 31.8
Euro Leisure	92½	+ 19	+ 25.8
OS Grp	28½	+ 5	+ 21.2
Kalon	130	+ 17½	+ 15.5
Ranger	212	+ 26½	+ 14.2
Premier	14¼	+ 1¾	+ 14.0
EFM	355	+ 42½	+ 13.6
Hemingway	26	+ 3	+ 13.0
SOCO Intl	35	+ 4	+ 12.9
Tadpole Tech	15½	+ 1¾	+ 12.7
Monument	42¼	+ 4¾	+ 12.6
Europower	11¼	+ 1¼	+ 12.5
LASMO	135	+ 15	+ 12.5
Schroders	1440	+158	+ 12.3
Keller	238½	+ 26	+ 12.2
Servisair	231	+ 24½	+ 11.8
Amec	238½	+ 25	+ 11.7
Perpetual	4042½	+412½	+ 11.3
Br Borneo	130	+ 13	+ 11.1
Lon Scot Bk	128	+ 12½	+ 10.8
Waterfall	62	+ 6	+ 10.7
Yorklyde	63	+ 6	+ 10.5
Hampton Trust	16	+ 1½	+ 10.3
Friends Ivory Sime	182½	+ 17	+ 10.2
BP Amoco	1021½	+ 92	+ 9.8
Infobank Intl	84½	+ 7½	+ 9.7

FALLS:

Stock	Close	Chng	Chng%
Molins	112½	– 30	– 21.0
FS Dev	13½	– 2½	– 15.6
Cityview	21¼	– 3¾	– 15.0
Lamont Hldgs	51	– 7½	– 12.8
Water Hall	13½	– 1½	– 10.0
Jarvis Porter	75	– 8	– 9.6
Cox Insce	156½	– 16	– 9.2
Towry Law	44½	– 4	– 8.2
Elsevier	859	– 73¼	– 7.8

TEMPUS

Canary poised to fly

CANARY WHARF is as much a bet on the behaviour of its larger tenants (Morgan Stanley, CSFB, HSBC) and the markets in which they operate as it is on the property values. If the banks flee to Germany or the financial markets implode, the Canary will go hungry.

But given London's, and the Docklands', headstart over Frankfurt, the Germans are unlikely to eclipse us. The historical advantage is bolstered by the language barrier. Of more concern is the mood on Wall Street because that, more than anything, holds the key to whether there will be the demand from banks and brokers required to fill the five million plus square feet of space.

The attraction of Canary Wharf boils down to your view of the value of future development. Canary Wharf's valuers came up with two figures. The traditional UK open market value technique — which values the sites at their current worth — indicates the buildings not yet built are worth £622 million. But a US-style discounted cashflow analysis of the future profits (including tax breaks) prices the "virtual" property at £1.5 billion.

To judge from the pricing of the float, the Canary's pre-float soundings of investors encountered resistance to any attempt to price in much of the development potential. Nor, crucially, is there much in there to reflect the £400 million in enterprise zone tax breaks.

This is good news. It leaves Canary shares conservatively priced and investors with plenty to play for. Institutional investors should certainly take a slice. Private individuals — who are not being offered shares in the placing — should also buy, unless the stock races to an immediate, large premium.

Reed International

REED International lost nearly 6 per cent of its value yesterday. Perhaps this was unsurprising since the annual results were uninspiring and the outlook for the current year was sketched as being as flat as a pancake. But this was known, and Reed took its hammering in December when the publisher issued a profits warning.

No, yesterday's sell-off was sparked by the lack of real news. The near-6 per cent fall in the share price was exaggerated because shares in Reed — the UK-quoted vehicle for the Anglo Dutch publisher called Reed Elsevier — have run up strongly since the New Year (and since it was tipped as a Tempus share of the year). But the non-appointment of a new chief executive did the damage.

It sounds trite to state that this most pressing management issue must be resolved before genuine progress can be made. But it is so. The recent share run shows there is potential, but potential without achievement can only be stretched so far.

The longer it takes to find a replacement the more the competition will erode Reed's market position. But professional publishing and electronic media make an attractive investment proposition. If Reed appoints soon, and the person is a sensible choice, the shares will rebound.

On the assumption that it will eventually find the right person, yesterday's plunge provides a chance to buy. In recent weeks the hopes may have got over egged, but they remain well founded. There is a future in specialist information.

REED BETWEEN THE LINES

Reed International share price — FTSE All-share index (rebased)

Source: Datastream

January February March — 460 / 480 / 500 / 520 / 540 / 560 / 580 / 600 / 620 / 640p

Diageo

THE sheer size and geographical spread of Diageo's four businesses makes interpreting its figures an invidious pursuit. But the positives outweigh the negatives, albeit marginally. Even in Asia, where spirits and beer took a hammering, the tide appears to have turned.

The main issue centres now on tackling Pillsbury, the performance of which gives cause for concern in the face of intense competition in its US heartland. Diageo's biggest division, spirits and wine, lifted profits by 4 per cent, with North America up an impressive 17 per cent. A 3.5 per cent rise in same-store sales at Burger King counterbalanced a one-off £6 million hit from the closure of 17 company-managed units in the US. Meanwhile, a big increase in marketing investment in the Guinness brand was reflected in a 5 per cent rise in volumes.

Adam Spielman at Salomon Smith Barney has pencilled in earnings per share of 34.7p, putting its shares on a multiple of 21 times. Although fears that LVMH may sell its 11 per cent stake have restrained share price growth, rapidly improving cashflow and a string of disposals make share buybacks almost inevitable. Hold.

Electra

EVEN the most gung-ho investors should now look for an exit from Electra Investment Trust, for at least part of their holdings.

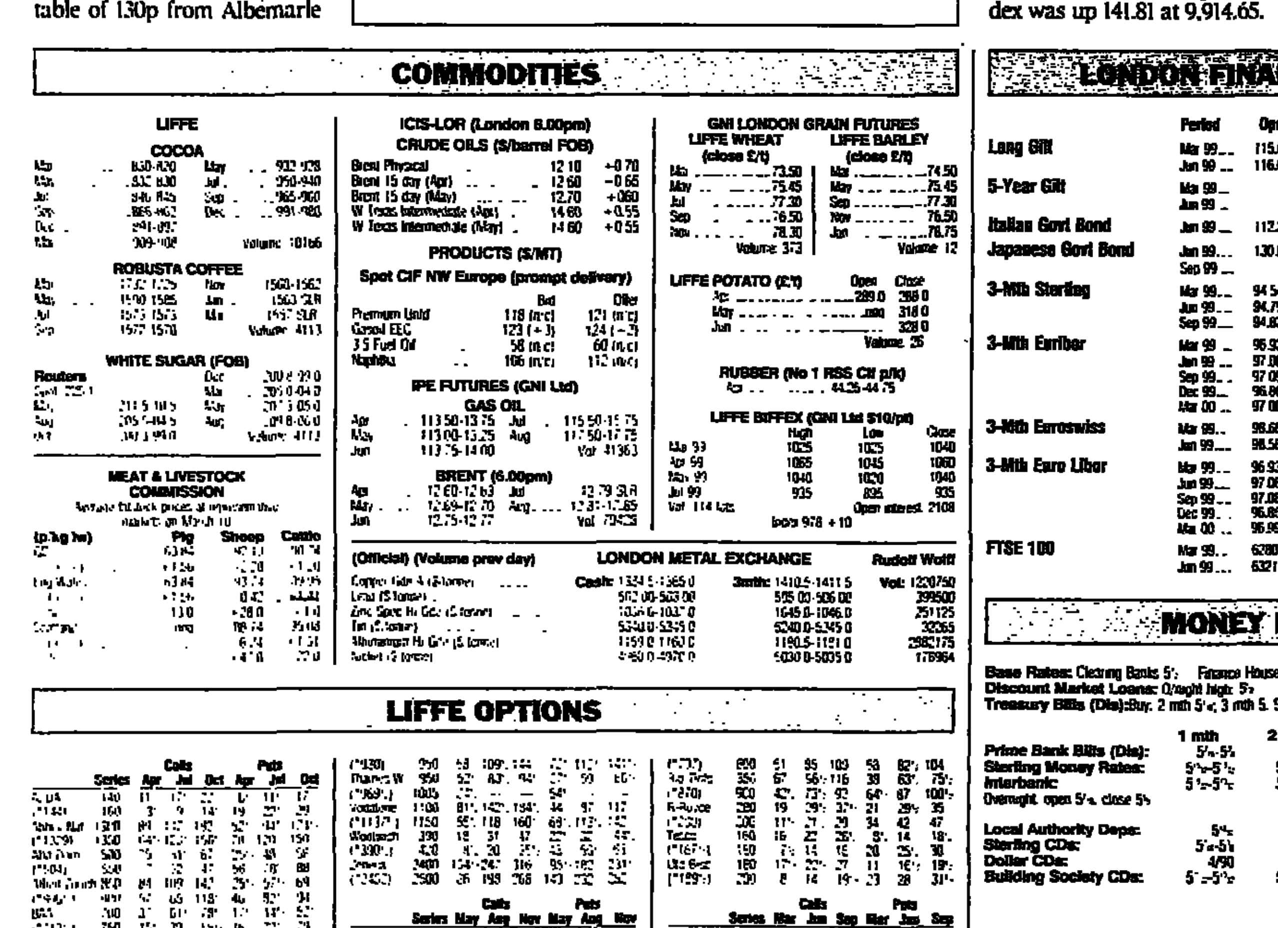
There is a chance — emphatically endorsed by the Electra board — that those who hang on will receive more than the 786p that was laid on the table yesterday via a tender offer.

But beware Greeks bearing gifts. The debt that the trust is taking on to fund the tender will be a mighty millstone going forward. The challenge in realising cash from unquoted investments should not be underestimated. Moreover, economic conditions in the five-year liquidation period may not be as conducive to unquoted sales as they are at present. Electra shares will drop to a big discount as soon as the tender is complete.

The best outcome for Electra investors would be to see 3i come back with an offer at or near 786p. But given 3i's reticence thus far it seems unlikely that they will pay that much.

Cautious investors should sell in the market now. Electra stock has performed well and shareholders should be sitting on a nice profit. If you are more adventurous you may care to stay involved, but be sure to tender for at least your full entitlement in the tender offer. There could be a tasty long-term upside but the accompanying downside risk means that you should reduce your exposure.

EDITED BY ROBERT COLE



COMMODITIES

LIFFE

COCOA

Mar	830-820	May	932-928
May	830-830	Jul	950-940
Jul	846-845	Sep	965-960
Sep	865-862	Dec	991-980
Dec	891-89[illegible]		
Mar	909-908		Volume: 10166

ICIS-LOR (London 6.00pm)

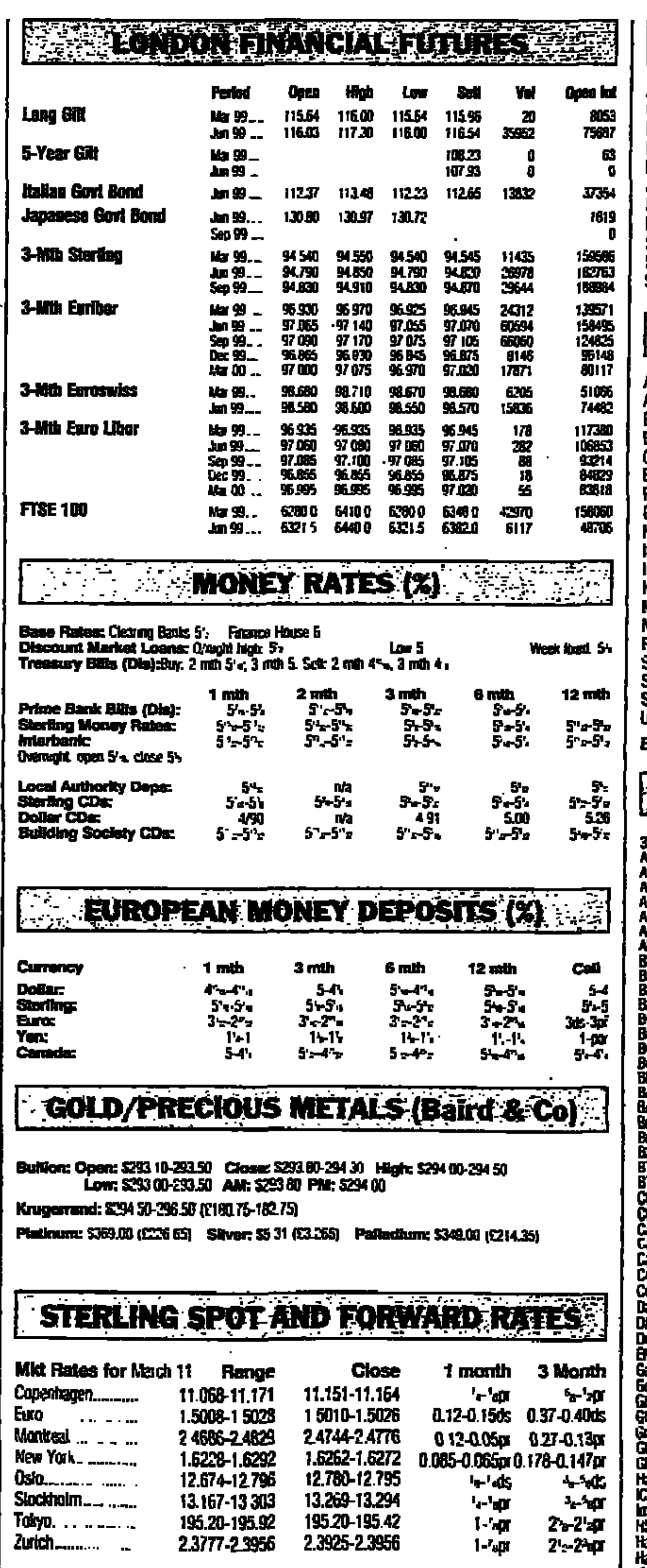
CRUDE OILS ($/barrel FOB)

Brent Physical	12.10	+0.70
Brent 15 day (Apr)	12.60	-0.65
Brent 15 day (May)	12.70	+0.60
W Texas Intermediate (Apr)	14.60	+0.55
W Texas Intermediate (May)	14.60	+0.55

GNI LONDON GRAIN FUTURES

LIFFE WHEAT (close £/t)		LIFFE BARLEY (close £/t)	
Mar	73.50	Mar	74.50
May	75.45	May	75.45
Jul	77.30	Sep	77.30
Sep	76.50	Nov	76.50
Nov	78.30	Jan	78.75
	Volume: 373		Volume: 12

LIFFE OPTIONS



LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol	Open Int
Long Gilt	Mar 99	115.64	116.00	115.64	115.96	20	8053
	Jun 99	116.03	117.30	116.00	116.54	35952	75687
5-Year Gilt	Mar 99				108.23	0	63
	Jun 99				107.93	0	0
Italian Govt Bond	Jun 99	112.37	113.48	112.23	112.65	13832	37354
Japanese Govt Bond	Jun 99	130.80	130.97	130.72			1619
	Sep 99						0
3-Mth Sterling	Mar 99	94.540	94.550	94.540	94.545	11435	159586
	Jun 99	94.790	94.850	94.790	94.830	28978	162763
	Sep 99	94.830	94.910	94.830	94.870	29644	168884
3-Mth Euribor	Mar 99	96.930	96.970	96.925	96.945	24312	139571
	Jun 99	97.065	97.140	97.055	97.070	60694	158495
	Sep 99	97.090	97.170	97.075	97.105	66060	124825
	Dec 99	96.865	96.930	96.845	96.875	8146	95148
	Mar 00	97.000	97.075	96.970	97.020	17871	80117
3-Mth Euroswiss	Mar 99	98.680	98.710	98.670	98.680	6205	51066
	Jun 99	98.580	98.600	98.550	98.570	15836	74482
3-Mth Euro Libor	Mar 99	96.935	96.935	96.935	96.945	178	117380
	Jun 99	97.060	97.080	97.060	97.070	282	106853
	Sep 99	97.085	97.100	97.085	97.105	88	93214
	Dec 99	96.855	96.865	96.855	96.875	18	84829
	Mar 00	96.995	96.995	96.995	97.020	55	83818
FTSE 100	Mar 99	6280.0	6410.0	6280.0	6348.0	42970	156060
	Jun 99	6321.5	6440.0	6321.5	6382.0	6117	48706

MONEY RATES (%)

Base Rates: Clearing Banks 5½ Finance House 6
Discount Market Loans: O/night high: 5½ Low 5 Week fixed: 5¼
Treasury Bills (Dis): Buy: 2 mth [illegible], 3 mth 5. Sell: 2 mth [illegible], 3 mth [illegible]

	1 mth	2 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth
Prime Bank Bills (Dis):	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	
Sterling Money Rates:					
Interbank:	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Overnight: open [illegible], close [illegible]					
Local Authority Deps:	[illegible]	n/a	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Sterling CDs:	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Dollar CDs:	4.90	n/a	4.91	5.00	5.36
Building Society CDs:	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS (%)

Currency	1 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth	Call
Dollar:	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	5-4
Sterling:	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Euro:	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	3ds-3pr
Yen:	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	1-par
Canada:	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

GOLD/PRECIOUS METALS (Baird & Co)

Bullion: Open: $293.10-293.50 Close: $293.80-294.30 High: $294.00-294.50
Low: $293.00-293.50 AM: $293.80 PM: $294.00

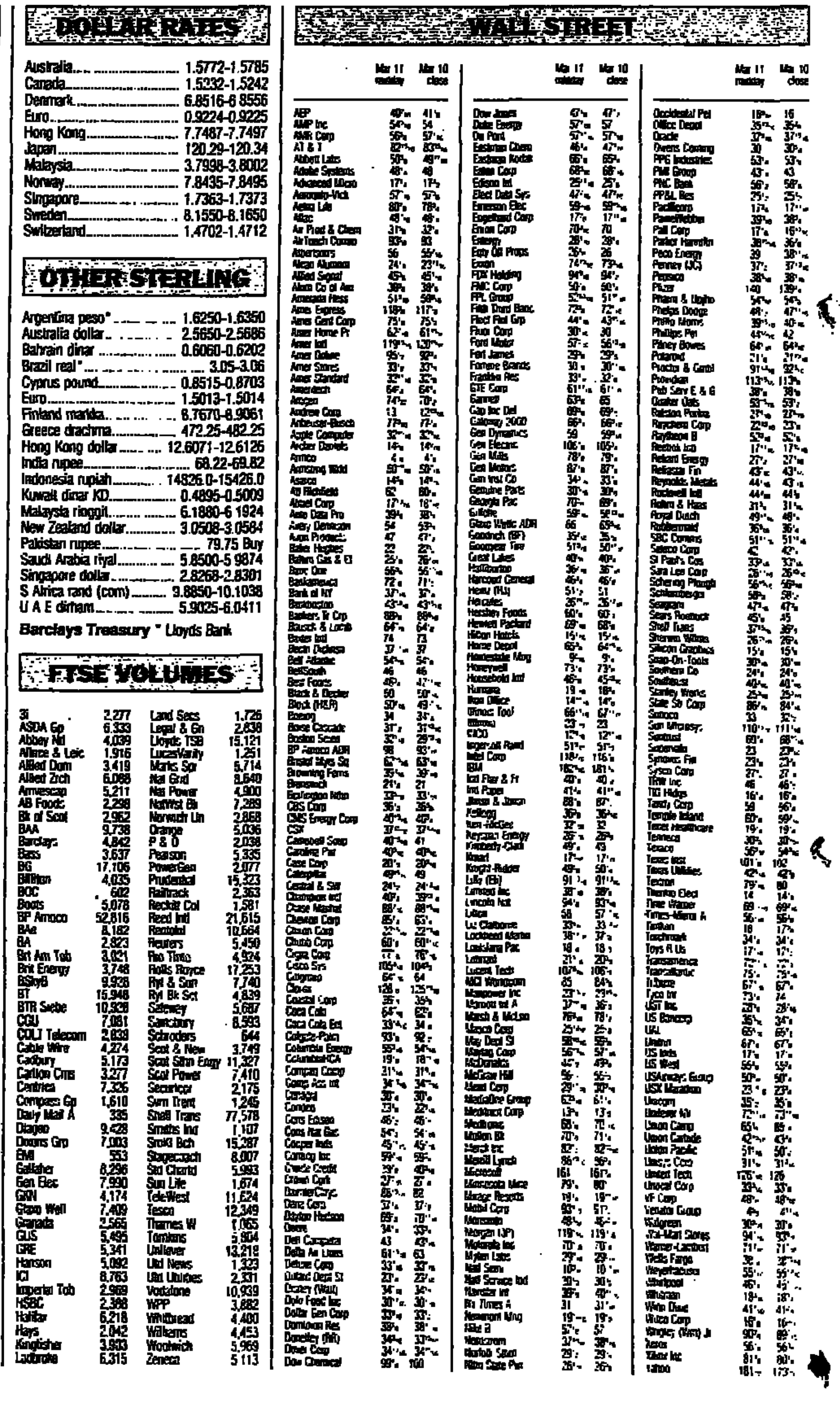
Krugerrand: $294.50-296.50 (£180.75-182.75)

Platinum: $369.00 (£226.65) Silver: $5.31 (£3.265) Palladium: $349.00 (£214.35)

STERLING SPOT AND FORWARD RATES

Mkt Rates for March 11	Range	Close	1 month	3 Month
Copenhagen	11.068-11.171	11.151-11.164	[illegible]pr	[illegible]pr
Euro	1.5008-1.5028	1.5010-1.5026	0.12-0.15ds	0.37-0.40ds
Montreal	2.4686-2.4829	2.4744-2.4776	0.12-0.05pr	0.27-0.13pr
New York	1.6228-1.6292	1.6262-1.6272	0.085-0.065pr	0.178-0.147pr
Oslo	12.674-12.796	12.780-12.795	[illegible]ds	[illegible]ds
Stockholm	13.167-13.303	13.269-13.294	[illegible]pr	[illegible]pr
Tokyo	195.20-195.92	195.20-195.42	[illegible]pr	[illegible]pr
Zurich	2.3777-2.3956	2.3925-2.3956	[illegible]pr	[illegible]pr

Source: Extel Premium = pr Discount = ds



DOLLAR RATES

Australia	1.5772-1.5785
Canada	1.5232-1.5242
Denmark	6.8516-6.8556
Euro	0.9224-0.9225
Hong Kong	7.7487-7.7497
Japan	120.29-120.34
Malaysia	3.7998-3.8002
Norway	7.8435-7.8495
Singapore	1.7363-1.7373
Sweden	8.1550-8.1650
Switzerland	1.4702-1.4712

OTHER STERLING

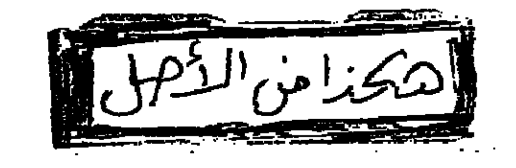
Argentina peso*	1.6250-1.6350
Australia dollar	2.5650-2.5686
Bahrain dinar	0.6060-0.6202
Brazil real*	3.05-3.06
Cyprus pound	0.8515-0.8703
Euro	1.5013-1.5014
Finland markka	8.7670-8.9061
Greece drachma	472.25-482.25
Hong Kong dollar	12.6071-12.6126
India rupee	68.22-69.82
Indonesia rupiah	14826.0-15426.0
Kuwait dinar KD	0.4895-0.5009
Malaysia ringgit	6.1880-6.1924
New Zealand dollar	3.0508-3.0584
Pakistan rupee	79.75 Buy
Saudi Arabia riyal	5.8500-5.9874
Singapore dollar	2.8268-2.8301
S Africa rand (com)	9.8850-10.1038
U A E dirham	5.9025-6.0411

Barclays Treasury * Lloyds Bank

FTSE VOLUMES

3i	2,277	Land Secs	1,726
ASDA Gp	6,333	Legal & Gn	2,838
Abbey Ntl	4,039	Lloyds TSB	15,121
Allnce & Leic	1,916	LucasVarity	1,251
Allied Dom	3,419	Marks Spr	5,714
Allied Zrch	6,088	Nat Grid	8,640
Amvescap	5,211	Nat Power	4,900
AB Foods	2,298	NatWest Bk	7,289
Bk of Scot	2,962	Norwich Un	2,868
BAA	9,738	Orange	5,036
Barclays	4,842	P & O	2,038
Bass	3,637	Pearson	5,335
BG	17,106	PowerGen	2,077
Billiton	4,035	Prudential	15,323
BOC	602	Railtrack	2,363
Boots	5,078	Reckitt Col	1,581
BP Amoco	52,816	Reed Intl	21,615
BAe	8,182	Rentokil	10,664
BA	2,823	Reuters	5,450
Brt Am Tob	3,021	Rio Tinto	4,924
Brit Energy	3,748	Rolls Royce	17,253
BSkyB	9,928	Ryl & Sun	7,740
BT	15,948	Ryl Bk Sct	4,839
BTR Siebe	10,928	Safeway	5,687
CGU	7,081	Sainsbury	8,593
COLT Telecom	2,839	Schroders	644
Cable Wire	4,274	Scot & New	3,749
Cadbury	5,173	Scot Sthn Engy	11,327
Carlton Cms	3,277	Scot Power	7,410
Centrica	7,326	Securicor	2,175
Compass Gp	1,610	Svrn Trent	1,245
Daily Mail A	335	Shell Trans	77,578
Diageo	9,428	Smiths Ind	1,107
Dixons Grp	7,003	SmKl Bch	15,287
EMI	553	Stagecoach	8,007
Gallaher	8,296	Std Chartd	5,993
Gen Elec	7,990	Sun Life	1,674
GKN	4,174	TeleWest	11,624
Glaxo Well	7,409	Tesco	12,349
Granada	2,565	Thames W	1,065
GUS	5,495	Tomkins	3,804
GRE	5,341	Unilever	13,218
Hanson	5,092	Utd News	1,323
ICI	8,763	Utd Utilities	2,331
Imperial Tob	2,969	Vodafone	10,939
HSBC	2,388	WPP	3,882
Halifax	6,218	Whitbread	4,400
Hays	2,042	Williams	4,453
Kingfisher	3,933	Woolwich	5,969
Ladbroke	6,315	Zeneca	5,113

WALL STREET



Wembley deal was a funny old game

Jason Nissé on the winners and losers in the battle for the Twin Towers

When the name Wembley is mentioned, emotions run high. People remember Bert Trautmann struggling on in goal for Manchester City with a broken neck in the 1956 FA Cup Final, Geoff Hurst scoring a hat-trick for England in the 1966 World Cup final or Gareth Southgate's penalty being saved in the Euro 96 semi-final. That is why, when business decisions come to be made about Wembley Stadium, normal rules of commerce seem to go out of the window.

Shareholders in Wembley plc, the company which has owned the stadium for the past decade-and-a-half, yesterday voted to sell their prized asset to the English National Stadium Development Company (ENSDC) — a subsidiary of the Football Association — for £103 million. The decision was greeted with joy at Lancaster Gate, the FA's headquarters, which has been a bit short of good news, having seen the reigns of its chairman, chief executive and national team manager all end in quick succession. The FA has always said the redevelopment of Wembley is key to England's bid to host the 2006 World Cup and has threatened to take England matches away from the stadium if the company did not sell.

But the deal was opposed by three of Wembley's non-executive directors — Roger Brooke, the highly respected chairman of Candover Investments; Peter Mead, the founder of the advertising group Abbot Mead Vickers and deputy chairman of Millwall; and Jarvis Astaire, the promoter and agent who has been involved with Wembley for longer than anyone involved in the story. They argued that it made no sense for a company that owns a whole series of assets around the stadium — including an indoor arena and a conference centre — to sell the centrepiece and give up any rights to managing the stadium. Wembley would end up like a doughnut with a hole in the middle, as it were.

The trio approached two potential bidders, Enic, the sports investment company, and SFx, the US stadium management group. Both wanted Wembley to keep an interest in the stadium, even if it was only on a management contract. They believed the £150 million budgeted cost of rebuilding the stadium — a move that would involve demolishing the famous twin towers — looked excessive. The bids these companies said they might make for Wembley were in excess of 400p a share. Wembley's share price yesterday fell 11½p to 352½p after the sale was approved.

What amazes the three rebel directors is that Wembley shareholders were prepared to vote for a deal that was worth less money to them than other potential transactions. And it was not merely legions of football-mad small shareholders — who could be forgiven for being motivated by a sense of national duty — who voted against their financial interest. The deal was pushed through by two of the UK's largest fund managers — Phillips & Drew and Schroders Investment Management — who own 35 per cent of the company between them.

Mr Brooke is incensed by what has happened. He argues that what has happened at Wembley is a smack in the face for all those people who have been campaigning for years for greater shareholder democracy and better corporate governance. "We looked at the agreement, saw it was flawed and wanted it renegotiated," says Mr Brooke. "We looked to the institutional investors for support and they were not there."

At key moments in the battle, Mr Brooke felt that the three non-executives were isolated. When they tried to put forward a vote of no confidence against Claes Hultman, the Wembley chairman, they found it needed a unanimous vote of all directors. When they tried to convince certain leading shareholders that they should reject the offer, their arguments fell on deaf ears.

"This does not bode well for the future of corporate governance," says Mr Brooke. "If institutional investors ask directors to take an independent view, they have to respect the view they take."

P&D and Schroders were not keen to talk about the battle openly yesterday. However, it is understood that they felt Wembley had little choice but to sell to the ENSDC because the stadium's largest customer is the Football Association.

Messrs Brooke, Mead and Astaire are now going to resign from Wembley's board — although not immediately. They want to ensure that the company secures a good slate of new non-executives to try to keep Mr Hultman and his colleagues in some sort of check. Mr Hultman, though, is keen to tell anyone who will listen that the trio may have taken this battle into extra time, but the final whistle is about to be blown on them.

Crunch time for UB's new Frenchman

Fraser Nelson reports on the man given the task of lifting United Biscuits out of the market mire

When Napoleon was choosing his generals, the first question he would ask was "has he luck?" His idea was that, regardless of education, lucky generals tended to win the battles.

United Biscuits has chosen to replace Eric Nicoli, its EMI-bound chief executive, with Leslie van de Walle for exactly this reason. "This man is our version of Arsene Wenger, the Arsenal manager," Colin Short, the UB chairman, said yesterday. "He is also, in Napoleonic terms, a very lucky general."

M van de Walle's CV does nothing to contradict this assertion. He was born and raised in Paris, and his luck began when spent his French *national service in South* Carolina selling French exports to the Americans. "I had completed an MBA," he says. "When you have an MBA, you have two options in the Army: you can do military service or commerce. I am of very slight build, I cannot run very fast and I'm not a good shot. So they decided I would be of better use to my country trying to sell French bread and French hats."

His first industry job was in the sales and marketing department of Danone. From there he moved to Cadbury Schweppes, where he was swiftly promoted through the ranks of marketing director, commercial director and business development director.

In 1994 he joined United Biscuits as head of its European snacks division. Within a year, he was head of continental Europe and in March last year he was promoted to the UB board as head of McVities.

Since joining UB he has been a Londoner. "I've lived in London for four-and-a-half years, but you wouldn't think it from my accent. I live in the same place all the French live in London — South Kensington. My children go to the French school there, and they love it."

Soon after joining UB, Mr Nicoli began grooming him *to become chief* executive. "UB asked me if I would be interested some time ago. For the last three years, I started going in with them to the results. But it is one thing to be prepared for a job and another to actually do it."

Aged 43, he now faces an enormous task. Over the past few years UB has crashed from being a £2.2 billion giant to one of the worst performers in London, worth just £888 million. It is accused of being an inefficient colossus that relies on mature, increasingly health-conscious markets that are already buying all the biscuits they want.

So what is to be done? His anwer is simple: same again. "The summary of my strategy is this: take cost out of the business and spend money supporting the main brands," he says. "Size is important, but the health of a company is measured by return on capital."

This is the same hymn sheet that Mr Nicoli has been singing from — and for this, M van de Walle makes *no apology. "I think one of* my key words will be continuity. The business is in good shape and we are doing the right things."

Cost-cutting is his speciality. He has just emerged from closing down a factory in France (a process, he explains, that "takes ages and about ten lawyers") — and saved £10 million of costs on a division making £20 million of profit from £450 million of sales.

Multiply this around the United Biscuits empire and you have what should be the magic of M van de Valle.

But then there is the issue of UB's shareholder value — and its ever-decreasing share price, now less than half the 400p level it reached four years ago.

His attitude to this decline has a touch of the Eric Cantonas. "The issue with the share price is that the price is the price. The market has taken the view that UB shares are worth 188p. I would buy shares at that point, but it's a personal decision."

But share price, not return on capital, is likely to be the standard by which shareholders will judge him. But the City, for all its reservations about the biscuit market, seems ready to give him the benefit of the doubt. "UB needs to keep cutting costs, and they seem to have realised this by appointing van de Walle," said one analyst.

And is he lucky? "I am lucky because I have a beautiful wife and two lovely daughters and business has been good to me as well. Up to now, at least."

How M&G attracted an offer that it just could not refuse

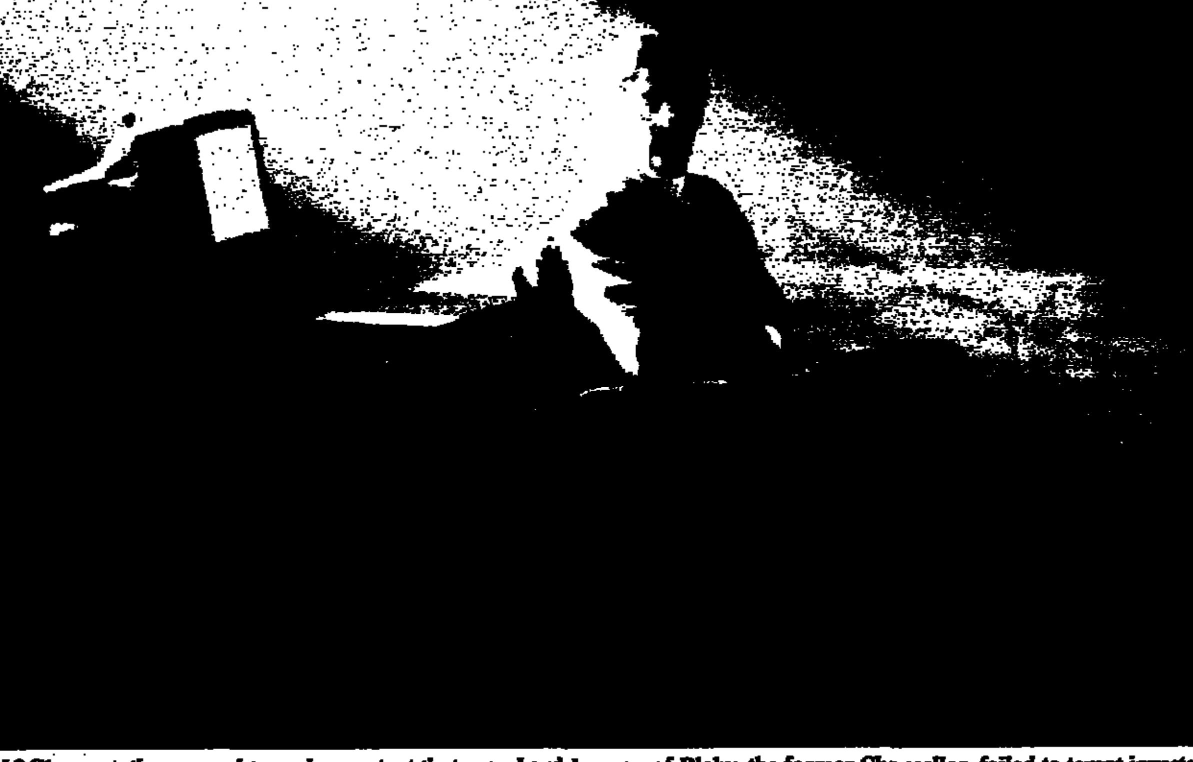
Paul Durman reports on the transformation that attracted Prudential's generous bid

City takeover documents routinely include sections for the acquiring company and its target to explain their motives for entering into a deal. Even by the coy standards of such documents, M&G Group's formal comments yesterday were unusually evasive about its real reason for recommending the £1.9 billion offer from Prudential Corporation. But it scarcely had to spell it out: the life insurer is paying a shedload of money for Britain's oldest unit trust company.

John Fairbairn, nephew of M&G's founder and the chairman of the Esmée Fairbairn Charitable Trust, which still owns a third of M&G, was more plain-speaking. "The price," he said, "is very, very good." Independent observers agreed. "It's an extremely high price," said Roman Cizdyn, an analyst at Merrill Lynch. Concern that Prudential has overpaid prompted its shares to fall by 2 per cent in a strongly rising market.

Prudential's offer of £25 a share is more than two-and-a-half times M&G's low during the crisis in world markets last autumn. The Pru is paying the equivalent of 10 per cent of the £18.5 billion of savings that M&G manages — a very high multiple by historical standards. To put it another way, the deal puts a £1.9 million price on the head of each of M&G's 1,000 staff.

This is a personal triumph for Michael McLintock, who is not 38 until later this month but has led a shake-up of M&G over the past two years. When he took over as managing director, M&G was in the unfamiliar position of being unpopular. Investors and independent financial advisers were shunning its funds. A few headlines from *The Times* tell the tale: "Performance left *wanting at M&G", "A strategy* of poor value for investors", "Can M&G come back?".



M&G's reputation sagged to such an extent that even Lord Lawson of Blaby, the former Chancellor, failed to tempt investors

For years M&G was regarded as one of the most solid and dependable companies in the industry it created. Its investment funds — which eschewed the racier names favoured by younger rivals — might not be at the very top of the performance tables, but they had delivered consistent long-term results. The company's dull but effective press and poster advertising hammered home the message that investing in shares produced much better returns than leaving your money in a building society.

The growth in its funds through the 1980s and early 1990s was built on the value investment philosophy. It sought out shares that were cheap on the basis of their assets or earnings, and laid particular emphasis on those paying high dividends. But, as Phillips & Drew and other value disciples know to their cost, in the mid-1990s this approach *ceased to work. Investors* placed an increasing premium on growth stocks in areas such as pharmaceuticals and telecommunications, and turned their backs on the small companies in older industries where M&G had so much of its money.

M&G performance sagged badly and its reputation went with it. The extent of the damage became painfully clear when the firm launched a high-income personal equity plan that drew only £20 million of new money despite it being backed by expensive television advertising featuring Lord Lawson of Blaby, the former Chancellor of the Exchequer. In its heyday M&G could attract ten times as much money into new funds almost without trying.

Mr McLintock set about changing M&G's tried but failing methods. A profusion of similar funds was rationalised. A market-tracking fund was introduced — anathema to dyed-in-the-wool stock pickers. *And although the fundamental* value approach was retained, it was modified to ensure that the whole of M&G's business would not again be exposed to a change in investment fashions.

At the same time, Mr McLintock was under pressure from the Esmée Fairburn trust. As one of Britain's wealthiest charities, it had decided it could no longer justify having all its money tied up in a single company and was looking for an opportunity to diversify its investments. With such a large stake in M&G effectively up for sale, the fund manager's independence was increasingly called into question.

Mr Fairbairn rejects the notion that Mr McLintock was given an 18-month ultimatum to turn the firm around. He acknowleges that there was an unspoken deadline because of "our desire to find an escape route. He asked for some time because M&G needed a re*vamp. They've done* a very good job."

M&G is not out of the woods yet but sentiment has improved. Ian Millward, investment marketing manager of Chase de Vere, said: "They talk a very, very convincing story. Their performance is no longer as bad as it was. The jury's still out."

Although the firm suffered another outflow of funds to investors last year, yesterday it said it is enjoying strong net sales of retail unit trusts.

The justification for the price Prudential is paying is the belief that an increasing proportion of the British workforce will have to make their own savings for the future. M&G's expertise in unit trusts and Peps will allow it to expand the range of products it can offer to its customers.

Tarnished or not, M&G remains a strong brand, and the price recognises the scarcity value of its franchise. The determination of the banks and insurers to expand into investment — whatever the price — suggests the days of independent fund managers are numbered. Many of the bigger and better firms have already been swallowed up: Gartmore by NatWest, Mercury Asset Management by Merrill Lynch, Jupiter by Commerzbank and Henderson by Australian Mutual Provident.

Little wonder, then, that shares in Perpetual, the star firm of the 1990s, jumped by more than £4 yesterday. Like the Esmée Fairbairn trust, Martyn Arbib, Perpetual's founder and chairman, retains a dominant shareholding. Now in his late fifties, he is said to spend an increasing amount of time at his home in Barbados.

Roger Cornick, Perpetual's deputy chairman, rejects the idea that the firm might be willing to surrender its independence. However, he acknowledged: "If someone comes along and offers you a silly price, you have a fiduciary duty to shareholders to take it seriously."

Silly price or not, the Esmée Fairbairn trust is not com*plaining. It will receive* £625 million. This will bolster funds to make grants to support arts and heritage, education, the environment, social welfare and social and economic research. John Fairbairn himself will receive £11 million for his stake, though he says he did not inherit these shares, but bought them all himself. Perhaps he should start a charitable trust.

Misconduct

ONE fund manager faces a nervous ten-day wait, because Nicholas Hely-Hutchinson, of Singer & Friedlander, makes his debut as a conductor at Clifford Chance, the solicitors, on March 23. It is part of a programme by London Musici, a small orchestra that is embarking on a series of concerts at various City institutions.

The project is run by Mark Stephenson, a musician and conductor who realised that many of the spectacular buildings scattered around the Square Mile were ideal for music, and that there were plenty of amateur conductors available too.

Hely-Hutchinson is the first such. He will receive coaching from Stephenson to make sure he is up to scratch and then debut with part of Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*.

"If this works, it will be a triumph of enthusiasm over talent," he says, admitting only to playing piano "modestly" up to now. London Musici so far has limited itself to low-key events but is about to sign a deal with a big City institution. Expect them at your local atrium soon.



Mozart: musical genius to get an enthusiastic airing

A TELLING vignette at United Biscuits. Leslie van de Walle, incoming chief executive, is asked if there will be any more board changes. Eric Nicoli, whom he is replacing, starts shaking his head. Colin Short, chairman, chips in to say, yes, there will be new blood among the non-executives. Nicoli stops shaking his head and starts nodding instead.

Nicoli is, of course, joining EMI. Long-suffering UB shareholders may be interested to learn his musical tastes tend towards the blues. Woke up this morning/My share price was way down on the floor.



Smallprint

EMBARRASSING, the things you have to admit when you float a company. Tucked away at the end of the Canary Wharf prospectus is the news that the company may be prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive. This is over the death of an employee of a subcontractor last March who fell from a steel staircase while not wearing a safety harness.

Of rather less import, but showing just how ludicrously exhaustive the disclosure requirements have become, is the entry for Sir Martin Jacomb, the senior non-executive.

He is a director of both Marks & Spencer and The Telegraph, and the document duly lists four minor offences the two have notched up involving incorrect pricing or advertising. The earliest dates from 1990.

Bugged

STILL down at the Wharf, elsewhere in the prospectus there is a warning about the millennium bug, and a long description of the work carried out so far debugging the security systems, the lifts and whatever. More than £500,000 spent upgrading the core financial system, for example, some of this on bug catching.

At the end of the note is the following: "There can be no assurance that the steps taken ... will successfully eliminate or minimise vulnerabilities of its software and systems," or that any problems will not have a "material adverse effect" on Canary Wharf. I ask what the point is of inserting such a meaningless piece of reassurance to investors. The reply is curt: "Lawyers."

JEFF HAMBLIN, chief executive of the British Tourist Authority, used to run the US office. He has recalled some of the odder questions from potential visitors to this country. Such as "When is the Edinburgh Festival on in London?" "When is the next performance of the Piccadilly Circus?" And my favourite: "Are the Cotswolds open on Sundays?"

Ad enough

AN END to the "Dinnergate" scandal involving Saatchi & Saatchi and the New Zealand Prime Minister, Jenny Shipley, which has gripped that country since Kevin Roberts, Saatchi's chief executive, had dinner with her.

Saatchi then won a massive increase in work from the New Zealand Tourist Board. I learn that Shipley, like all good politicians, has wriggled out of it. But Saatchi has been fired for coming up with proposals that "required a level of funding outside our budget". Teach you not to be so greedy.

MARTIN WALLER

city.diary@the-times.co.uk



"I too had dreams of getting to Wembley this year"

Rexam to complete disposals by year end

By Paul Armstrong

REXAM is set to finish shedding its non-core assets by the end of this year, raising a further "several hundred million pounds" in the process, Rolf Börjesson, chief executive, said yesterday.

Mr Börjesson said Rexam planned to sell its printing operations and most of its building and engineering interests as the last stage of its 2½-year campaign to focus solely on paper and packaging.

He would not be more specific about the likely proceeds, but said the sales would leave the company with interest cover of almost seven times.

Mr Börjesson was speaking after Rexam announced a pretax profit of £182 million (£179 million) for 1998.

Rexam said the economic difficulties in Asia and Brazil had taken their toll of several of its operations and trading so far this year had followed the pattern of late last year.

A final dividend of 8p was declared, leaving the year's payout at 14.1p.

Mr Börjesson said the sale of the remaining non-strategic assets would leave Rexam with packaging operations in food, beverage, health and beauty products and a coded film and papers division.

The surplus from these disposals will, he said, be used to fund bolt-on acquisitions in these sectors rather than one-off major purchases.

But Mr Börjesson warned investors that they should not expect future growth rates of 10 or 20 per cent, saying that the packaging industry offered steady but stable returns.

"A couple of per cent growth year after year is what you can expect," he said. "There is growth in packaging, but it is not the magnitude of telecommunications."

Rexam shares closed 2p lower at 202½p.

Börjesson: bolt-on deals

Total to buy out Kalon

By Martin Barrow

SHARES in Kalon Group, the UK paintmaker, rose 17½p to 130p yesterday after the company revealed that Total, the French oil and chemicals group, was considering taking full control of the business.

Total owns 63 per cent of Kalon, the legacy of a 1995 deal in which Kalon merged with Euridep, Total's paint arm.

Under the original deal, Total made a cash injection of £61 million to acquire a controlling stake in the merged venture. At the heart of the agreement was a plan to cut costs and improve the efficiency of the business, particularly in France.

Kalon shares peaked at 193p last year, but slumped to just 85p in October, reflecting difficult trading conditions. In 1997 the company earned pre-tax profits of £45.1 million on turnover of £472 million.



ANTHONY UPTON

SIG, Europe's top supplier of insulation productions, struck a cautious note yesterday, saying that the UK market is likely to come under further price pressure and the German market will remain difficult (Robert Lea writes). For 1998 the Sheffield-based company — led by Bill Forrester, above, the chief executive — reported pre-tax profits of £37.5 million, up £2.1 million on turnover up 18 per cent at £795 million. Earnings per share were 20.1p (20p), while the final dividend is 5.6p, making a total of 8.4p, a rise of over 7 per cent. The shares, weak of late, rose 2p to 181p.

Meggitt remains upbeat

By Adam Jones

MEGGITT, the aerospace and oil industry engineer, yesterday said that it was well equipped to cope with a likely fall in orders from Boeing.

Demand from Boeing, a customer for Meggitt seals and cockpit clocks, is expected to peak this year. Mike Stacey, the Meggitt chief executive, said orders from small jet makers, plus military aircraft business, would still be lucrative.

He said the low oil price would mean a quiet year for Heatric, which makes heat exchangers for the oil and gas industry. Meggitt can afford to spend up to £50 million on acquisitions in areas such as aerospace.

Meggitt was announcing 1998 profits of £35.4 million, up from £31.5 million in 1997. Sales rose 11 per cent to £293.9 million. Diluted earnings per share rose from 9.3p to 10.2p. The final dividend is 3.53p, making 5.15p for the year, up 10 per cent on last year.

European sees shares jump as offer is unveiled

By Dominic Walsh

SHARES in European Leisure jumped more than 25 per cent yesterday after the cue sports and nightclubs group unveiled the terms of its planned merger with Allied Leisure, the ten-pin bowling and Burger King restaurants operator.

Although the deal is being couched as a merger, in practice it will involve Allied acquiring its rival for £35.4 million and Allied's directors assuming the top jobs. The combined group will have a market capitalisation of £68.1 million, with European shareholders emerging with 52 per cent of the shares.

Under the terms of the offer, European shareholders will receive 361 new Allied shares for every 100 shares held, valuing European at about 99p a share — a premium of 46 per cent to the price before the two parties admitted they were in talks on February 22. European's share price reacted with a 19p rise to 92½p, while Allied was unchanged at 27½p.

Neil Goulden and Martin Scott, respectively chief executive and finance director of Allied, will assume the same posts in the merged board. Their counterparts at European, Ian Rock and Patrick Hooper, are expected to have their two-year contracts paid off. The chairman will be Victor Steel, currently chairman of European.

In the half-year to December 31, European reported a rise in operating profits from continuing operations from £3.19 million to £3.31 million, and the interim dividend is 1.4p (1.25p). In the same period, Allied lifted operating profits from £2.21 million to £2.53 million. The dividend is 0.38p (0.35p).

Gokal loses appeal

By Saeed Shah

ABBAS GOKAL, the Pakistani shipping tycoon, lost his appeal yesterday to overturn his conviction for the fraud that led to the spectacular collapse of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International.

Lord Justice Christopher Rose, in a ruling at the Court of Appeal, said the evidence that saw Gokal, 62, sent to prison in 1997 for 14 years on two counts of conspiracy was "overwhelming" and that he was at the heart of a highly sophisticated fraud "with international consequences of great gravity".

Gokal had been found guilty of syphoning $1.2 billion out of BCCI. Gokal's Gulf Group, a Middle East shipping company, was the biggest borrower from BCCI. Gokal appealed on grounds of how he was brought into UK jurisdiction, having been extradited from Germany after being arrested in 1994 in Frankfurt, as his flight from Pakistan to the US stopped for refuelling.

Travis Perkins says housing will pick up

TRAVIS PERKINS, the builder's merchant, expects buyers to return to the new homes market this year (Saeed Shah writes).

Tony Travis, the company's chairman, said: "Most builders expect to see a rising trend in new house sales. The reduction in interest rates that began last October has not yet restored consumer confidence though there are signs that buyers are returning."

Travis Perkins lifted 1998 pre-tax profits by 22 per cent, to £60.5 million, on sales up by 12.1 per cent, to £623 million. The year's dividend is 12.1p, up from 11.0p. The shares rose 22½p to 466p.

The company's operating margin rose to 9.9 per cent, from 8.5 per cent, last year.

Cattles to expand on high street

By Robert Lea

CATTLES, the consumer credit group, is aiming to expand on the high street, taking the place of the retreating retail banks, in an attempt to produce 20 per cent growth this year to match last year's profits rise.

The Yorkshire company is expanding from its roots in weekly door-to-door credit collecting, by opening its Welcome branches at a rate of one a week to try to build a nationwide network over five years.

In 1998 the company made pre-tax profits of £47.7 million against £39.9 million excluding prior-year exceptional gains. Eddie Cran, chief executive, said: "Cattles is a growth story. The market expected growth of 15 to 20 per cent. That is what we delivered and that is what we are aiming for this year."

Earnings per share came in at 24.3p against 27.8p. Total receivables in the year grew by more than 40 per cent to £487 million, while provisions for bad debt rose from £18 million to £28 million.

The company is offering one new share for each one held in a bonus issue to halve the share price, in a bid to make the stock more marketable. The shares have raced up from about 200p two years ago to more than 800p last month. Yesterday they were unchanged at 760p. The final dividend of 7.9p (6.55p) makes a total of 11.8p, a rise for the year of 20 per cent.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

EU cuts £8m from British Steel fine

A £22.4 MILLION fine imposed on British Steel by the European Commission was reduced by more than £8 million by European Court judges yesterday. The fine, imposed in 1994 for British Steel's involvement in a price-rigging cartel, was by the far the biggest individual penalty out of a total of £72.8 million in fines imposed on 17 European steelmakers.

The European Court of First Instance, which deals with legal challenges to EU competition laws, upheld the Commission's action in fining the steel cartel. It rejected counter-claims that the Commission itself was implicated in market rigging, but agreed to cut the fines. British Steel's £22.4 million penalty was cut to £14 million. The fines were imposed after a Commission inquiry into the EU market in steel beams. Brussels declared that 17 steel firms were operating an illegal cartel, engaging in price fixing, market rigging and exchanging confidential information. The second-highest fine, of £8.5 million, was imposed on a French steel beam manufacturer.

German bank raided

POLICE have raided the head office of HypoVereinsbank, Germany's second-largest bank, in an investigation into the financing of its property investments. The Munich prosecutor launched the inquiry into real estate and accounting irregularities last October, shortly after HypoVereinsbank announced a DM3.5 billion (£1.25 billion) write-off for overvalued assets. These assets were owned by Hypo-Bank, which merged with Vereinsbank, its fellow Munich bank, last year. The dispute has cast a shadow over Germany's biggest banking merger in postwar history.

Davis Service ahead

DAVIS SERVICE GROUP, the laundry and HSS tool-hire company, lifted pre-tax profits for 1998 by 25 per cent, before exceptional items, to £55.2 million on turnover of £407.9 million, up 13 per cent. A final dividend of 8.5p, up from 7.6p, makes a full-year payout of 12.6p (11.33p). Davis said that forecasts for 1999 were difficult because of its range of activities, which are dependent on customer spending that is, in turn, determined by the economy, though current indications are good. The shares rose 25p to 451p, near their record high.

Alcatel plans job cuts

ALCATEL, the French telecoms group, plans to cut 12,000 jobs worldwide over the next two years to achieve cost savings of about £200 million. Serge Tchuruk, Alcatel managing director, announced the cuts along with 1998 results, which showed net profit surging to €2.34 billion (£1.6 billion) from €711 million in 1997. Many of the job losses will be in the US where the group is to shut its Alcatel Data Networks unit. The company's share price plunged almost 40 per cent in a single day last September when M Tchuruk said 1998 results would be worse than expected.

Hemingway profit dip

HEMINGWAY Properties yesterday said that the fall in interest rates makes property a "very good" asset class for investment. However, despite reporting net assets per share up 8 per cent to 55.1p for the year to December 31, 1998, shares in the property investment company yesterday stood at 25¼p, up 2¼p on the day but still off their 12-month high of 49½p. Pre-tax profits fell to £5.2 million, from £7.8 million, because of reduced property sales. A final dividend of 0.47p per share raises the total payment for the year by 10 per cent to 0.67p.

Lamont's lament

FALLING demand, disrupted production and the cost of laying off staff resulted in a drastic fall in profits of Lamont Holdings, the Belfast linen and carpets group. Operating profits came in at just £451,000, against £7.2 million, last year on turnover down by more than 10 per cent at £83 million. Earnings per share, boosted by a property disposal, came in at 4.43p (20.01p). The total dividend for the year falls to 3.65p, from 12.8p. The shares dived 7½p to 51p having fallen about 60 per cent in the past 12 months

More misery at Molins

THE tale of woe at Molins, the maker of machinery for the tobacco and packaging industries, continued yesterday when, just ten weeks into its new financial year, the company said that it was unlikely that it would be able to match last year's operating profit levels. Reporting losses for 1998 of £6.6 million after restructuring charges of £15.8 million, Michael Orr, chairman, said that with little demand for tobacco machinery, 1999 operating profits would be less than £9.1 million.

Record-breaking run

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

BANKS

BREWERIES, PUBS & REST

BUILDING MATERIALS

CHEMICALS

CONSTRUCTION

DISTRIBUTORS

DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS

ELECTRICITY

ELECTRONIC & ELECT

ENGINEERING

ENGINEERING, VEHICLES

FOOD MANUFACTURERS

HEALTHCARE

HOUSEHOLD GDS & TEXT

INSURANCE

INVESTMENT TRUSTS

LEISURE & HOTELS

MEDIA

MINING

OIL & GAS

OTHER FINANCIAL

PHARMACEUTICALS

PRINTING & PAPER

PROPERTY

RETAILERS, FOOD

RETAILERS, GENERAL

SUPPORT SERVICES

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

TRANSPORT

WATER

ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET

SHORTS (under 5 years)

MEDIUMS (5 to 15 years)

LONGS (over 15 years)

UNDATED

INDEX-LINKED

Source: FT Information

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
AIB GOVETT UNIT TRUST LTD				
0171 378 7979 Dealing: 0171 407 7800				
Protected Funds				
UK Safeguard	147.75	157.45	- 1.20	
-do- NAV to Jan 19	140.39	140.39		
UK Equity Safeguard	117.78	125.96	- 0.49	2.02
-do- NAV to Mar 19	110.98	110.98		
US Eqy Safeguard	97.68	103.79	+ 0.77	
Cash	954.15	958.92		6.25
UK Growth Funds				
UK Equity Gen	447.89	476.36	+ 8.17	1.50
UK Small Cos	94.28	100.83	- 0.34	0.50
FTSE 250 Index	110.49	118.12	+ 1.80	1.69
Geared UK Index	#25.930	#27.373	+ 0.31	5.75
Income Funds				
Corp Bd	87.36	90.79		6.66
Monthly Inc	43.92	46.99	- 0.13	7.98
International Funds				
American Gen	390.32	412.74	- 1.32	0.17
American Str	179.38	191.47	+ 1.47	
JC US Index	#30.370	#31.996	- 0.14	4.50
European Gen	442.20	467.89	- 1.20	
European Str	207.93	222.34	- 0.58	
Japan Gen	112.75	118.95	- 0.91	
Asia Pacific	64.11	68.55	- 0.08	1.09
Pacific Strat	89.92	96.17	+ 1.22	
Greater China	147.52	157.77	+ 0.53	
Latin America	63.44	67.80	- 1.29	
Int Growth	201.34	214.94	- 1.62	0.11
Balanced Exempt	185.32	191.81		2.15
Global Strategy	48.65	52.03	- 0.35	
AXA EQUITY & LAW UNIT TST MGRS				
01203 553 231				
AXA Equity & Law Unit Trust				
Balanced Acc	85.73	91.21	- 0.93	1.67
Balanced Inc	77.02	81.84	+ 0.84	1.67
Brit Excell	138.30	147.40	- 2.40	2.46
Brit Fndmtls Acc	173.00	184.10	- 1.60	3.92
Brit Fndmtls Inc	105.80	112.60	- 1.00	3.92

THE TIMES FRIDA

Not often does this ... venture to compre... the sweaty ritual of ... or the arcane joys of high fina... But a saga like the Battle of W... bley Stadium is far too enthr... to be left dangling between ... straps and bean-counters. Ind... its chief features will be happily ... ognised by arts page readers ... monstrous waste of lottery mo... clash of giant egos, quangos ap... ently staffed by headless chick... government complacency, ... managerial mishaps on a Tit... scale. In short, all the makings ... first-class national humiliation.

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London seems destined to ... reluctant host to one public b... ing fiasco every decade, doesn... In the Seventies it was the B... can Centre; in the Eighties the ... ish Library. Both were appare... constructed in a surreal par... universe where budgets and d...

Time tra

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Not to be left behind by this national examination of conscience, Hugh Leonard's latest venture on to the Abbey stage uses the playwright's by-now familiar dramatic technique of overlapping the past and present to offer glimpses not of blue remembered hills, but of a century of infamy.

The audience is forced to hit the ground running as they are unceremoniously planted in a field in rural Limerick where a portentous meeting of three women is taking place around an ancient stone.

Their meeting is extraordinary since one of the trio, Cat (Karen Ardiff), has been dead for many years but appears as a youth, while another, her daughter Triona (Catherine Walsh), is still living in 1960s Ireland, a time when "no child was too young to offend the mother of God".

The third woman, Cat's 37-year-old grand-daughter Kate (Ingrid Craigie), a novelist who is careful always to include love in the title of her books, lives in the Ireland of the present day and therefore wins the dubious honour of filling everybody in on "the way things are".

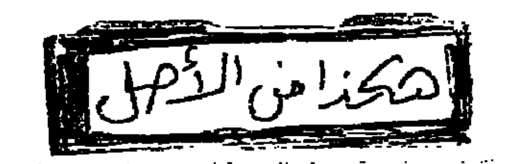
Dark secrets that turn out to be neither as dark nor as secret as they seemed bubble to the surface as Leonard compares and contrasts Ireland

In another decade or two, Matthew Warchus's produ... on its fiftieth cast change ... may look askance at colleagu... have not yet done time playing ... Serge. Yvan or all three of the ... riven apart by Serge's purchase ... all-white painting for a price ... lent to what bumbling Yvan ear... year. Yasmina Reza's play will h... come the 21st century's *Mouse*... though only in terms of longevi...

Christopher Hampton's crisp ... ate translation takes wing and ... with a passion seldom to be fo... Mrs Christie: a description of ... wife as "wearily malicious"... stance, creates her in front of u... before one of her tiresome ges... mockingly imitated.

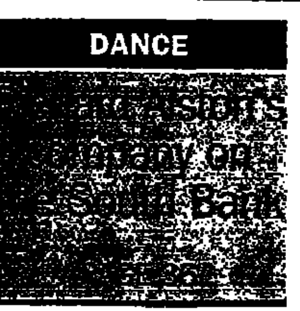
The present cast is the tenth s... play arrived in London two and ...







DANCE



THE TIMES ARTS

POP





Sick as a parrot over ref's Wembley decision

Not often does this column venture to comprehend the sweaty ritual of sport or the arcane joys of high finance. But a saga like the Battle of Wembley Stadium is far too enthralling to be left dangling between jockstraps and bean-counters. Indeed, its chief features will be happily recognised by arts page readers — ie, monstrous waste of lottery money; clash of giant egos; quangos apparently staffed by headless chickens; government complacency; and managerial mishaps on a Titanic scale. In short, all the makings of a first-class national humiliation.

Besides which, it *is* an arts story. Mess around with Wembley Stadium and Arena and you have, at a stroke, jeopardised two of the very few venues in London capable of housing the biggest pop and showbiz events, from Madonna to *Disney on Ice* and the Three Tenors.

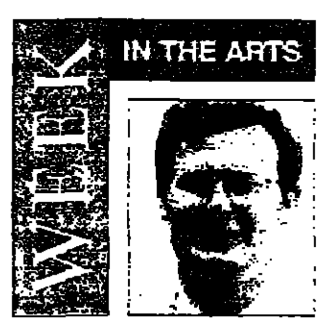
London seems destined to play reluctant host to one public building fiasco every decade, doesn't it? In the Seventies it was the Barbican Centre; in the Eighties the British Library. Both were apparently constructed in a surreal parallel universe where budgets and deadlines passeth all understanding.

Then, in the Nineties, the amazing parade of pratfalls (and indeed prats) accompanying the Royal Opera House redevelopment awoke memories of Norman Wisdom in older observers and the Teletubbies in younger ones. And now comes the Battle of Wembley Stadium, which seems certain to add greatly to the hilarity of nations in the first decade of the new century.

It all started when England decided that it wanted to stage the football World Cup in 2006. No, let me rephrase that. It started when the Government decided that it wanted England to stage the World Cup. Cynical friends offer the disgraceful hypothesis that this is part of a deep-laid plan to get Labour re-elected for the third time on a surge of feel-good patriotic fervour — but we know, of course, that such base calculations never enter the saintly realm of Tonyland. More pertinent, surely, is the Football Association's wacky belief that, having ditched a New Age reincarnationist as national footie coach, and replaced him with a man who says he will do the job on alternate Wednesday afternoons (weather permitting), England can actually *win* the damn trophy.

Anyway, in order to bring the competition to England, Wembley Stadium needs to be rebuilt. Nobody argues about that. Its amusingly medieval lavatories and corrugated-iron tea-bars may have been objects of wonder in 1923, but they hardly conform to present-day notions of comfort and joy. So a £120 million lottery grant, the biggest for any project except the dreaded Dome, will help to pay for the purchase and demolition of the stadium, and the erection of a new £200 million 80,000-seat venue in its place. How do you spend £200 million on building a new football ground, where the biggest features are fresh air and grass? The answer is that where lottery cash is involved, anything's possible!

WEEK IN THE ARTS



RICHARD MORRISON

Then life's little complications started to kick in. The FA, which decided (along with the Sports Council) to purchase the stadium for £103 million and do the redevelopment itself, was rocked by a bizarre loans scandal and the Hoddle debacle. Then Brent council suddenly discovered a hitherto well-hidden preservationist zeal, and kicked up a stink when it learnt that Wembley's "world-famous" twin towers would be demolished in the redevelopment. Naturally a gaggle of tweedy heritage "guardians" jumped on the bandwagon to save the wretched concrete lumps.

Meanwhile the board of Wembley plc (which owns the stadium and its satellite arenas and exhibition halls) became bitterly divided. Three non-executive directors, led by a colourful 75-year-old boxing promoter, Jarvis Astaire, wanted to pull out of the FA deal altogether, arguing persuasively that Wembley is such a ghastly mess of inadequate car parks, dismal walkways and hopeless transport links that it needs redevelopment as a whole, not with the stadium removed and separately owned.

The rebel directors tried to stoke up shareholder discontent by encouraging rival bids for Wembley, first from a British company, Enic, then recently from the giant American promoters, SFX. The latter is a particularly intriguing outfit. With a revenue of $1.3 billion from 12,000 events last year, SFX could well afford to offer a good price for Wembley and turn it into Europe's foremost entertainment complex.

This boardroom conflict quickly developed into a thrilling slanging match between Astaire and the excitable Ken Bates, chairman of Chelsea Football Club, who is leading the FA's bid. Bates accuses Astaire of imperilling the whole World Cup 2006 dream. Astaire responds by calling the Chelsea gaffer "Chairman Mao Tse-Bates". Now, now, girls; it's only a game.

But of course it isn't. It's big business. Yesterday the Wembley shareholders voted to press ahead with selling the stadium to the FA. That decision will be hailed as a triumph for the "patriots": after all, the way is now clear for England to bid for the World Cup. But patriotism in this case does seem to be the last refuge of the megalomaniac — and there are a good many of them in the football world. The fact is that the Wembley complex hosts just a handful of football matches a year, whereas it stages dozens of big showbiz events every month. To redevelop the stadium, under the control of a football quango whose recent managerial record may charitably be called appalling, without reference to Wembley's showbiz programme and without solving the massive logistical problems of reaching this disastrously cramped corner of North London — that is a recipe for chaos.

What can be done? Well, when this Government created the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, it made much of how this grouping would allow many-sided challenges to be tackled "holistically". If Chris Smith is going to put that fine ideal into practice, the time is now and the place is Wembley. It's far more than a "field of dreams" for muddied oafs; it is a vital square mile in the nation's cultural life. Lavish £300 million on it by all means, but don't end up with a white elephant in a wasteland. London doesn't need another of those; one Dome is enough.

Time travellers

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Their meeting is extraordinary since one of the trio, Cat (Karen Ardiff), has been dead for many years but appears as a youth, while another, her daughter Triona (Catherine Walsh), is still living in 1960s Ireland, a time when "no child was too young to offend the mother of God".

The third woman, Cat's 37-year-old grand-daughter Kate (Ingrid Craigie), a novelist who is careful always to include love in the title of her books, lives in the Ireland of the present day and therefore wins the dubious honour of filling everybody in on "the way things are".

Dark secrets that turn out to be neither as dark nor as secret as they seemed bubble to the surface as Leonard compares and contrasts Ireland past and present. But even before his heroines get around to quoting Larkin at each other, a familiar tone pervades the piece, a mixture of ridicule and jealousy provoked by the manners and freedoms of the modern world. Leonard can see, without much strain, that something has been gained over the old order in which single pregnant women were all but incarcerated, their children stolen from them. But he cannot bring himself to celebrate the new because there is simply too much around that merits his disdain.

Karen Ardiff pushes her weak role to its limits, giving through her boisterous physicality all the little substance the production has, while Cath-



erine Walsh's good work never really escapes the flatness of her role. Kate, the character who ostensibly lives in the present day, seems as dated as any of her ancestors, full of Seventies zeal about her independence as she explains that "these days" someone you are in a relationship with is called your partner.

When Triona inquires in return if there is a business meeting going on, it gives only the meekest hint of the standard of the play's humour. Like too much of *Love in the Title*, Leonard's quips feel as though they were buried in a time capsule several years ago and only recently exhumed.

LUKE CLANCY

MARILYN KINGWILL



Femme fatale: Amanda Harris as one of her four combustible women in *Take the Fire*

A paler shade of white this time

In another decade or two, when Matthew Warchus's production is on its fiftieth cast change, actors may look askance at colleagues who have not yet done time playing Marc, Serge, Yvan or all three of the friends riven apart by Serge's purchase of an all-white painting for a price equivalent to what bumbling Yvan earns in a year. Yasmina Reza's play will have become the 21st century' s *Mousetrap* — though only in terms of longevity.

Christopher Hampton's crisply literate translation takes wing and stings with a passion seldom to be found in Mrs Christie: a description of Marc's wife as "wearily malicious", for instance, creates her in front of us, even before one of her tiresome gestures is mockingly imitated.

The present cast is the tenth since the play arrived in London two and a half years ago, and though the play's shocks, set pieces and central argument still hold firm this is not one of the better combinations of actors. In different productions our sympathies switch between the actors at different points, but few people are likely to find themselves staying for long on the side of Danny Webb's Serge.

Of course he has every right to buy anything he can afford, and plainly he loves his 20 square feet of white paint — though Reza, unwisely, never gives him the chance to reveal why this arouses such devotion. But when he first shows Marc his purchase his face wears a silently smug, thin smile of achievement that defines Serge's personality as ill-natured.

Until we learn from Marc that their long friendship has been, from his point of view, that of mentor and pupil, the probability of these two ever having cared for each other seems minute. Tom Mannion's Marc clearly sees Serge's new love as treachery, but his attempts to be tolerant are convincing as well as comic, seething beneath the deadly calm.

Gary Olsen's Yvan earned a round of applause for the account of his ghastly wedding arrangements, but he should look to the clarity of his speaking here and in his collapse into sobs before his implacable ex-friends.

The silent olive-eating scene is as elegant and funny as ever but the matter of the play, not art but friendship, rests on frailer foundations this time round.

JEREMY KINGSTON

Fanning the French flames

Some pollster recently claimed that women average 10,000 words a day to men's 4,000. If Cocteau's one-act *Bel Indifférent* is to be believed, that is an insulting understatement. I did not count the words that poured from the protagonist, a nightclub performer based on Edith Piaf and played by Amanda Harris, but it was an unstoppable torrent of hurt rage. Since the man in the case remained silent throughout, the score over a full day would probably be 50,000 to nil.

Ravishing Indifference, as Helen Lea and Andrew Wale have translated the title, is the fourth and longest segment of the 75-minute evening called *Take the Fire*. And why that name? Because Cocteau was once asked what he would take from his house if it were burning and replied that he'd take the fire. That is the sort of remark with which French intellectuals have always irritated plainer folk, but it serves to point out that the evening's content is not exactly ice-cold.

All four of the women played by Harris are pretty combustible, and all are living or reliving moments of maximum ignition. In the opening monologue, which involves a young criminal who has disguised himself as a woman to evade the *flics*, Harris commits murder with a gun. In the second, which is written in verse, she is a maid who kills her mistress with poison, and in the third she is a gamblaholic who mainly damages herself. But though these pieces give Harris the chance to show us that she can smoulder and singe, they are pretty thin beside *Ravishing Indifference*.

True, this is hardly rich, complex stuff, but only radical feminists and newer-than-new men will deny that there is some truth in its simplicities. He is not home by 2am. She makes a furtive, apologetic call to one of his friends, who fails to give him a proper alibi. Then in he walks, puts on a dressing-gown, reads *Le Figaro*, falls asleep, gets up, dresses and goes out again; and all without emitting half a consonant. Meanwhile she delivers a monologue that moves from martyred reproach through insults and violent threats to protestations of love and humiliating apologies.

THEATRE



Cocteau wrote this robust if predictable piece after Piaf told him of her troubles with Paul Meurise, and Piaf proceeded herself to perform it in public. Did she, I wonder, justify Lea and Wale's title by making her audiences feel that coals of fire were pouring from her innards and being heaped on her lover's head? That is the challenge; and, good actress though she is, Harris does not quite rise to it. She is pained and pleadingly middle-class, not tough and abjectly, defiantly ugly: an Amanda, not a Piaf.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

■ **LISTINGS**

Swingles at the Barbican

ARTS

■ **MUSIC**

Previn's birthday party

RECOMMENDED TODAY

Guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Marit Hargie

LONDON

GROSS INDECENCY: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde: Michael Pennington plays Wilde, with William Hoyland and Clive Francis as counsel for and against, in Moises Kaufman's play. Gielgud (0171-494 5065). Previews from tonight, 7.45pm. Opens Mar 22.

MAHLER AND VIENNA: The second leg of Christoph von Dohnányi's series dedicated to the music of Gustav Mahler reaches its climax with a performance by the Philharmonia of the composer's epic Ninth Symphony. Dohnányi conducts. Festival Hall (0171-960 4242). Tomorrow, 7.30pm. ◪

IN PERFECT HARMONY: An abundance of vocal harmonies can be enjoyed when the world-famous Swingle Singers are joined by members from the barbershop fraternity for an evening of glorious a cappella music. Barbican (0171-638 8891). Tomorrow, 7.30pm. ◪



Alexander Goehr is celebrated in Cambridge

ELSEWHERE

BIRMINGHAM: The Towards the Millennium festival continues its survey of the 1980s. Here the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra under Simon Rattle repeats last week's London concert of Lutoslawski's lyrical Third Symphony followed by pieces by Takemitsu and Adams. Symphony Hall (0121-212 3333). Tomorrow, 7pm. ◪

CAMBRIDGE: As a conclusion to the University Music Faculty's celebrations of Cambridge composers of the past 25 years, Stephen Cleobury conducts a performance of Alexander Goehr's mystical cantata, The Death of Moses. The evening also marks Goehr's departure as professor of music here. Trinity College Chapel (01223 503333). Tomorrow, 7.30pm.

EXETER: Mike Alfreds directs Philip Osment's Buried Alive, about a photojournalist emotionally traumatised since childhood. Latest for the Madness & Method touring rep company. Northcott Theatre (0392 493493). Opens tonight, 7.30pm.

GLASGOW: Walter Weller conducts his last concert with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra this season. Soprano Ruth Falcon joins the maestro and orchestra for Richard Strauss's *Four Last Songs*. Brahms, Smetana and Dvorák also feature. Royal Concert Hall (0141-287 5511). Tonight, 7.30pm. ◪

NEW WEST END SHOWS

Jeremy Kingston's choice of theatre showing in London

■ House full, returns only ◪ Some seats available □ Seats at all prices

□ **SLAVA'S SNOWSHOW:** The excellent Russian clown and mime artist Slava Polunin returns, with new material, new clowns as well as his unforgettable finale. Piccadilly Theatre (0171-369 1734).

◪ **MACBETH:** Rufus Sewell and Sally Dexter play the superstitious thane and his missis in John Crowley's production. Queens, W1 (0171-494 5041).

□ **GAMBLERS:** Tam Williams plays the seemingly invincible hero in Gogol's thrilling play, directed by Charlie Wood for a King's Head/Double Edge co-production. BAC (0171-223 2223). ◪

□ **HAMLET:** Rupert Wickham plays the hero in Christopher Geelan's production, opening this relaunched theatre. Greenwich ◪ (0870 840 1111).

□ **TAKE THE FIRE:** Four monologues for women (gambler, maid, prostitute, desperate lover) by Jean Cocteau, performed by Amanda Harris. Paul Carrington's direction weaves them together. See review, page 35. Lyric Studio (0181-741 8701). ◪

■ **SPEER:** Klaus Maria Brandauer directs and plays the title role of Hitler's master architect in Esther Vilar's drama. With Sven Eric Bechtolf. Almeida (0171-359 4404).

□ **SHOCKHEADED PETER:** The Scissorman is back: wonderfully sinister show by the Cultural Industry team with the Tiger Lillies and Martyn Jacques's falsetto screech. Lyric (0181-741 8701). ◪

□ **DEFENDING THE CAVEMAN:** Mark Little makes his West End debut in Rob Becker's new comedy, tracing the origins of the man/woman difference back to the caves. Apollo (0171-494 5070).

■ **COPENHAGEN:** Heisenberg mysteriously calls on Niels Bohr in wartime Denmark. Michael Frayn's intelligent play transfers to theWest End. Michael Blakemore directs. Duchess (0171-494 5075).

FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE

James Christopher's choice of the latest movies

NEW RELEASES

PATCH ADAMS (12): Robin Williams puts the comic stitches in this absurd medical movie about a doctor who wants to cure the world with laughter. Director Tom Shadyac extracts an obscene amount of sentiment with as little anaesthetic as possible

PLEASANTVILLE (12): Ingenious spoof of American family values. Two dysfunctional 1990s teenagers get sucked into a squeaky-clean 1950s TV soap. Great performances from Tobey Maguire, Jeff Daniels and Reese Witherspoon.

CENTRAL STATION (15): Walter Salles's Brazilian road movie creates fabulous chemistry between a young boy in search of his identity and a cynical ex-teacher in search of her soul. Fernanda Montenegro and Vinicius de Oliveira are astonishing.

SCHIZOPOLIS (18): Steven Soderbergh's experimental satire on corporate anxiety is utter gibberish, with camera angles and dialogue to match.

CURRENT

BELOVED (15): Oprah Winfrey is surprisingly powerful as a runaway slave haunted by poltergeists, lynch mobs, and a dead daughter. Jonathan Demme's overlong film fails, however, to get inside the festering heart of Toni Morrison's Pulitzer Prize winner. With Danny Glover, Thandie Newton, and Kimberly Elise.

THE 39 STEPS (U): Hitchcock's witty take on Buchan's ripping yarn is full of fabulous set pieces. Robert Donat's smooth bachelor dashes across Scotland pursued by police and ruthless spies. A romance and good hand-cuffing rarely feel more than a frame away.

THE THIN RED LINE (15): A glittering cast of American soldiers lose their sanity in the South Pacific during the Second World War. Terrence Malick's artistic masterpiece stars Sean Penn, Jim Caviezel, Ben Chaplin, Nick Nolte.

YOU'VE GOT MAIL (PG): Bullet-proof romantic blockbuster with Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan who fall in love on the internet. Writer/director Nora Ephron.

TITANIC TOWN (15): Julie Walters excels as a pugnacious Catholic housewife in this grim review of Northern Ireland's Troubles circa 1972. Roger Michell directs.

AFFLICTION (15) Paul Schrader's bruising portrait of a frustrated small-town cop Nick Nolte and James Coburn put in powerful performances as father and son caught in a cycle of male violence

Music at his feet

DANCE

Richard Alston
Queen Elizabeth Hall

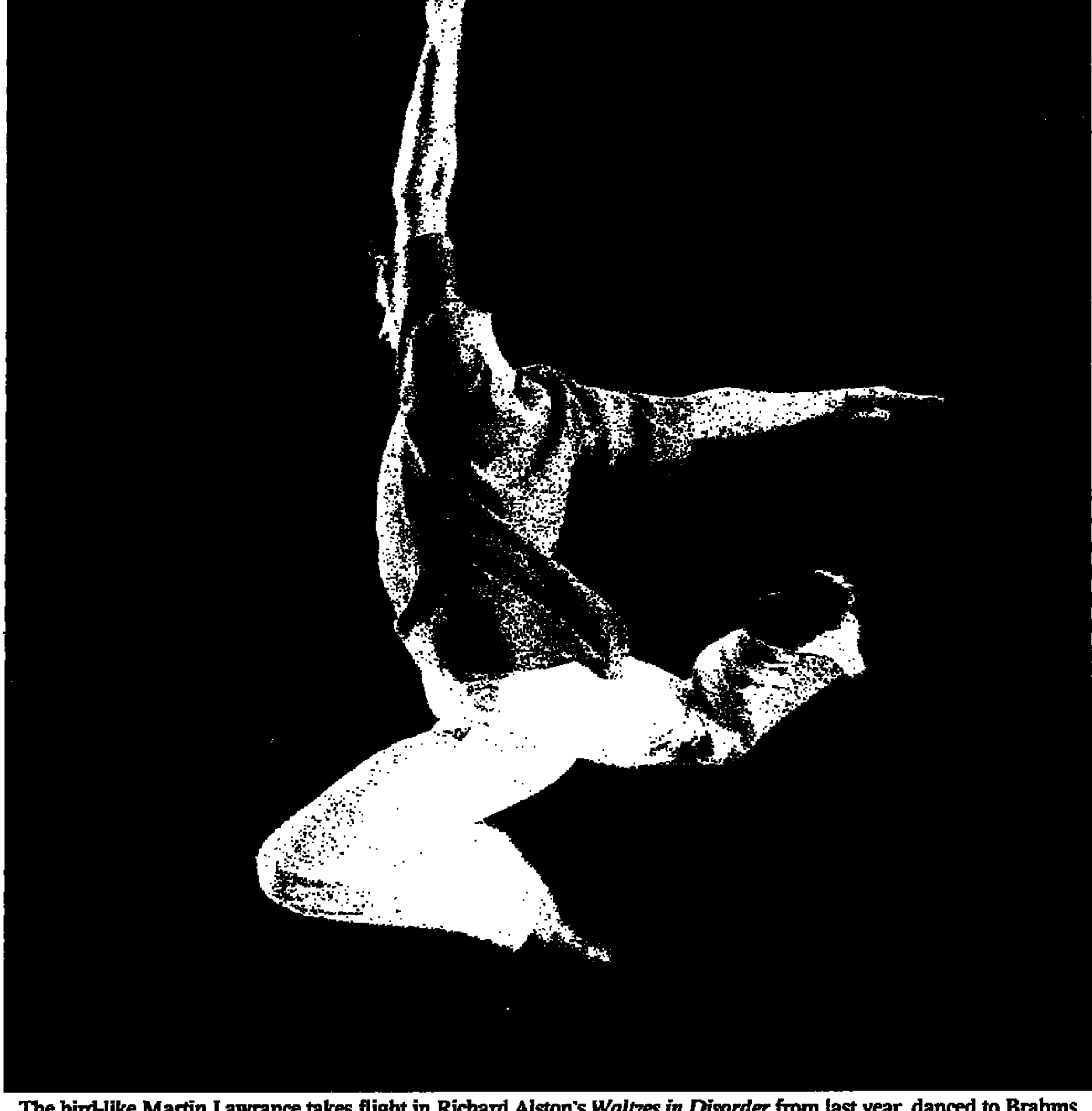
As a dance-maker, Richard Alston thrives on music. It feeds his soul, and can help to set his choreography soaring. Alston's company sailed into London this week on three small but balmy gusts of live music. The performances are part of a national tour that demonstrates why, after 30 years, Alston remains one of our top artistic resources.

In 1994's *Movements From Petrushka*, set to Stravinksy's pared-down piano version of his full orchestral score, the instrument is centre stage. So is the drama, conveyed entirely — yet also abstractly — through dance.

Alston's inspiration is both Fokine's 1911 ballet about a pitiable puppet-pariah, and the equally tragic later life of Vaslav Nijinsky, originator of the ballet's title role. Christopher Tudor gave the central figure a troubled power. A string of fluid solo actions perfectly betray an outcast's anguish: a quick tumble, rolling shoulder and juddering head, a flicking of the arms, some elbow-clutching crouches. How ironic that all this neurotic physical behavious should stem from such a strong, stable-looking specimen as Tudor.

His tortured isolation was underlined by the high-spirited partnerings of three couples. Here the weighted inflections of Russian folk dance are sewn into Alston's familiar style, complete with signature windmill-armed leaps. The music capers on the edge of mania, and Alston rides it without becoming its slave.

In last year's *Waltzes in Disorder*, the cue came from Brahms's Liebeslieder-Walzer Op 52, for four singers and two pianists. The lush loops and lacings of Alston's writing might initially justify those who accuse him of sexlessness. Then suddenly, with a clasp of a neck and a stroked cheek, the dance is doing more than skimming across a surface of whipped-cream Romanticism. Two men — Tudor and the delicate, bird-like Martin Lawrance — establish an intimate and enchanted bond that can't be shaken off.



DEE CONWAY

The bird-like Martin Lawrance takes flight in Richard Alston's *Waltzes in Disorder* from last year, danced to Brahms

The programme's newest work exposes some of Alston's limitations. The impetus of *Slow Airs Almost All of Them* is Mozart's arrangements of several Bach fugues for string trio. It's hard not to regard the result as just another of Alston's attractive ensemble pieces — all subdued, lyrical athleticism, a melding of mostly solos and duets so smooth, so lacking in traction that they roll on to, and slip out of, your consciousness as you watch.

Yet Alston's craft as an honest-to-goodness maker of steps transcends mere noodling around. Although he rarely turns up the heat to full blast, the work communicates a passionate and mature intelligence about bodies in motion.

DONALD HUTERA

Subtly celebrating

CONCERT

LSO/Previn
Barbican

It wasn't quite the way the party should have begun — the party-poppers went missing after Kiri Te Kanawa's cancellation at the weekend. But three days later André Previn's 70th birthday celebrations got under way in earnest at the Barbican.

Earnest was the word. For it was with the measured tread, retrospective cast of mind and visionary perspective of a fellow 70-year-old that Previn and the London Symphony Orchestra began the evening. Previn won national affection as early as the 1960s for his championship of English composers; and it was Vaughan Williams's Fifth Symphony, breathing the rarefied air of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, which Previn chose for the occasion.

This was a performance of subtle, quietly spoken authority. When the material is as insubstantial as the modally inflected melody which dominates the *Preludio* of this symphony, then questions of texture, balance and pacing become all important. Previn drew perfectly poised playing from the LSO, anticipating the exquisitely placed string chords at the start of the slow *Romanza*. Half-remembered, far-off things they seemed, haunted by the shade of Tallis, and finding their apotheosis in a final "alleluia" glimpsed through a golden arch of horns and trumpets.

Britten, no less keenly championed by Previn, was to find literary soulmates in different corners of the 17th century from Vaughan Williams. And the 14 settings of poetry, from Spenser to Auden, which compose the *Spring Symphony* seem to lift what is quintessentially English up and over into the wider European musical community for the first time.

Previn's performance with the LSO made us hear those pungent, exotic sonorities of the opening anew. The "thousand-coloured light" of the spring sun, as evoked in an anonymous 16th-century poem, was refracted through the strong and variegated voices of the London Symphony Chorus, whose admirable diction reanimated every poem that was theirs.

John Mark Ainsley was Spenser's heroic *Merry Cuckoo* and, later, created quite wonderfully the ecstatic vision within Henry Vaughan's *Waters Above*, its spiritual showers dancing in the bows of the violins.

The violas were equally sensitive partners to Roberta Alexander in Herrick's *Welcome Maids of Honour*, while Felicity Lott enjoyed robust repartee with the excellent Finchley Children's Music Group in *The Driving Boy*.

A slightly stooping Previn seemed physically dwarfed by his tall colleagues as he took a final bow; but these self-effacing performances had undeniable and memorable stature.

HILARY FINCH

Lloyd says his prayers

NEW JAZZ ALBUMS

■ **CHARLES LLOYD**
Voice in the Night
(ECM 1674 559 445-2)

ALTHOUGH Charles Lloyd has now made six ECM albums since returning to recording in 1989, this is the first to feature the tenor player fronting an entirely US-based band, and he has chosen it wisely.

Lloyd's association with Billy Higgins goes back 40 years, and the drummer's ability to maintain the subtlest of pulses, through light brushwork on his skins and the delicate propulsiveness of his cymbal playing, fits Lloyd's contemplative, almost prayerful approach perfectly. Bassist Dave Holland provides the supple energy at the band's core, and guitarist John Abercrombie takes full advantage of the generous amount of space he's granted with a series of perfectly judged, swooningly graceful solos.

It is Lloyd himself, though, with his familiar warbling, rapturously meditative sound, who sets the album's tone, whether he is reinterpreting old material — *Island Blues*, *Forest Flower*, exploring originals, or taking a fresh look at Billy Strayhorn's *A Flower is a Lovesome Thing*.

■ **RUSSELL GUNN**
Ethnomusicology Volume 1
(Atlantic 7567 83165-2)

AS ITS title suggests, this latest release from the US trumpeter Russell Gunn — his first for a major label — concerns itself with, in his words, "the study of black music on all levels . . . the sounds coming out of apartment windows and cars driving by. I have to incorporate those things into what I do."

Consequently, straightahead jazz trumpet of the sort Gunn provides for Wynton Marsalis's Lincoln Centre Jazz Orchestra jostles with the hip-hop and rolling funk he plays with Branford Marsalis's Buckshot LeFonque; a Woody Shaw composition is preceded by a brief scratching solo by DJ Apollo, and samples, of everything from Run DMC to statements from Charles Mingus and Wynton himself, crop up throughout the album.

The result, courtesy of the skill and enthusiasm of the musicians Gunn has assembled (who include reedsman Gregory Tardy and trombonist Andre Heyward), not to mention his own brightly inventive trumpet and flugelhorn playing, is an intriguing — and immediately attractive — *tour d'horizon* of contemporary New York sounds.

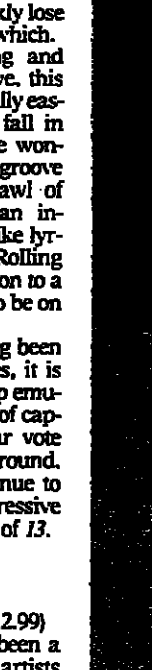
CHRIS PARKER

POP ALBUMS
13 cheers for Blur

TOMORROW
Top gigs listed in Metro

Triskaidekaphilia rules, OK

NEW POP ALBUMS: Blur tempt fate and the fickle taste of the public on the experimental *13*, and emerge triumphant, says **David Sinclair**



Magical mystery tourists: while Oasis have long been compared to the Beatles, it is Blur who have emulated the Beatles' trick of capturing both the popular vote and the creative high ground

BLUR
13
(Food CD 29 £14.99)
"WHO dares wins", a motto designed to inspire elite soldiers, could equally well have been coined to describe Blur's progress through the 1990s. Having made their mark as sad, strung-out indie-kids, they had the wit to embrace the brash, laddish certainties of Britpop, and then the nerve to administer a savage bite to the hand feeding them via 1997's *Blur*, a wilfully outré collection which confounded all expectations by becoming their bestselling album yet.

They have now thrown all remaining caution to the wind, cutting the ties with their longstanding producer Stephen Street, abandoning any lingering musical inhibitions and tempting fate with the very title of their sixth album, *13*. The results so far include a single (the pseudo-gospel singalong, *Tender*) that was even playlisted on Radio 2, a "Blur day" on Radio 1 and blanket approval in all quarters of the press. As far as having your cake and eating it goes, it doesn't get much chewier than this.

Produced by William Orbit (who co-produced Madonna's *Ray of Light*), the album is every bit as adventurous as *Blur* — and then some. The horribly distorted guitar sound on *Bugman*, the sonic hailstorm that gradually overhauls *1992*, the long, discordant climax of *Trimm Trabb* and the fragmented, falsetto vocals in *Battle* suggest a range of impeccable leftfield influences ranging from Iggy Pop and early Roxy Music to Tortoise and the Cocteau Twins. The strange little codas, tacked on like musical appendices to numbers such as *B.L.U.R.E.M.I.*, *Coffee & TV* and *Caramel* contribute to a sense of mild disorientation, and if it weren't for the digital display you would quickly lose track of which song is which.

Constantly surprising and extraordinarily inventive, this is an album that is initially easier to admire than to fall in love with, although the wonderfully loose, hip hop groove and wonky guitar scrawl of *Trailerpark* provides an instant buzz, its mantra-like lyric "I lost my girl to the Rolling Stones" drawing attention to a problem which seems to be on the increase.

While Oasis have long been compared to the Beatles, it is Blur who have ended up emulating the Beatles' trick of capturing both the popular vote and the creative high ground, a feat which they continue to pull off with the impressive scope and sheer daring of *13*.

BETH ORTON
Central Reservation
(Heavenly HVNLP22 £12.99)
ALTHOUGH she has been a fellow traveller of dance artists such as William Orbit and the Chemical Brothers, Beth Orton reverts almost entirely to folk singer-songwriter mode for *Central Reservation*. With violins and cellos lending support to her acoustic guitar and austere vocal tone, numbers such as *Blood Red River* and *Devil's Song* have the chilly air of a chamber recital, while the more relaxed moods of *Sweetest Decline* (with Dr John on piano) and *Pass in Time* (featuring Terry Callier on harmony vocals) tend towards the soporific.

The best tracks are *Stolen Car*, with its revving slide guitar solo by Ben Harper and the harder, hip hop groove of *Stars All Seem to Weep*, but neither song is typical. "It's like catching snow on your tongue/Can't pin this butterfly down," she sings, and the charm of this album proves equally elusive.

WILCO
Summerteeth
(Reprise 9362-47282 +2 £13.99)
HAVING promised so much with their 1997 album, *Being There*, Wilco return with *Summerteeth*, a mildly disappointing follow-up which, although assembled with the same scrupulous attention to detail as *Being There*, lacks the stormy passion and casual swagger that made that album such compulsive listening.

Proudly flagging a range of 1960s influences — from the Lennonesque plod of *My Darling* to the Beach Boys-style harmonies of *Nothing'sgonnastandinmyway (Again)* — Jeff Tweedy sings in a worldweary voice of sleepless nights, flawed relationships and the trials of growing old.

"I printed my name on the back of a leaf/And I watched it float away", he sings in *Via Chicago*, a song full of dark imagery and melancholy intent that disintegrates into a Neil Young-inspired guitar firestorm as, admittedly not for the only time, a burst of the old magic returns.

JEFF BECK
Who Else!
(Epic 493041 £14.99)
STILL the most accomplished rock guitarist this country has ever produced, and still the most indolent, Jeff Beck takes the latest step in a long but fitful career with *Who Else!* (apparently not a reference to Rory Bremner), his first album of new material since *Jeff Beck's Guitar Shop* in 1989.

While hardly a part of the contemporary scene, Beck is alert to recent developments, and makes a good fist of marrying his explosive playing style to the fast, Prodigy-inspired techno rhythm tracks of *What Mama Said* and *Psycho Sam*.

But his haughty tone, hurtling glissandos and canyon-wide bends are heard to best effect on the slower, more conventional *Brush With the Blues*, a live recording that suggests he is on better form than ever.

He has left it too late to salvage his commercial standing, but if the dance revolution really has re-tuned people's ears to the delights of instrumental music, perhaps the rave generation will at least grant this album the respect it deserves.

CDs reviewed in *The Times* can be ordered from the Times Music Shop on 0345 023498

LINKS

WEBSITE:
Blur: www.blur.co.uk
Beth Orton: www.heavenly.co.uk
Wilco: www.wilcoweb.com
Jeff Beck: www.epicrecords.com/jeffbeck
TELEVISION:
Top of the Pops: BBC2, tonight, 6.55pm
Later with Jools Holland: BBC1, tonight, 1.50am
RADIO:
UK Top 40: Radio 1, Sunday, 4pm

TOP TEN ALBUMS

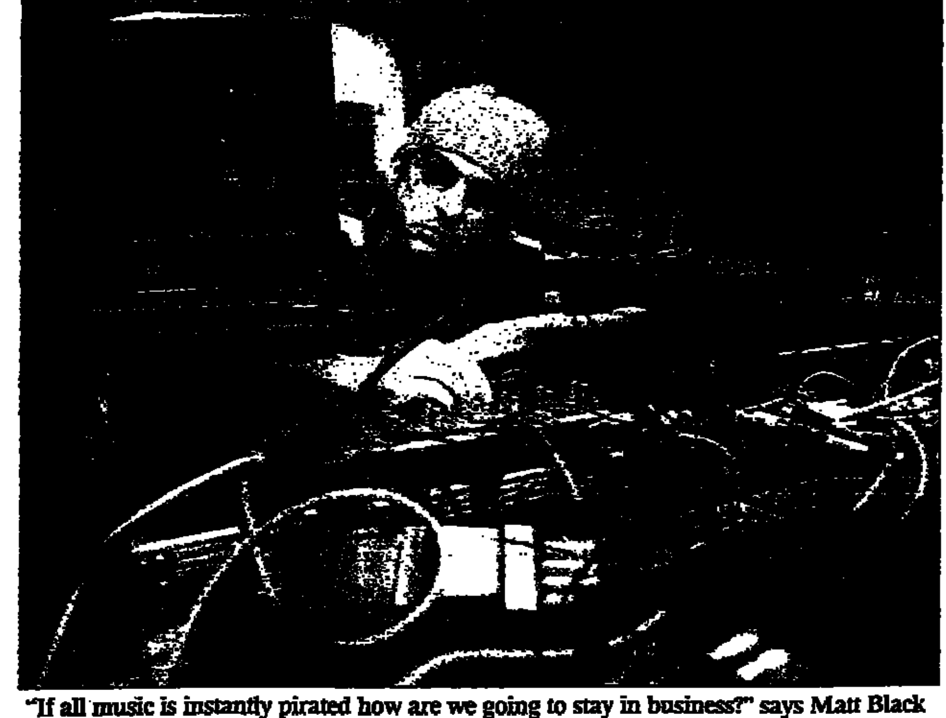
1	(-)	Performance and Cocktails	Stereophonics (V2)
2	(1)	Talk on Corners	Corrs (Atlantic)
3	(2)	The Miseducation of	Lauryn Hill (Columbia)
4	(3)	I've Been Expecting You	Robbie Williams (Chrysalis)
5	(4)	This Is My Truth Tell Me Yours	Manic Street Preachers (Epic)
6	(5)	You've Come a Long Way, Baby	Fatboy Slim (Skint)
7	(6)	Forgiven, not Forgotten	Corrs (Atlantic)
8	(16)	My Love Is Your Love	Whitney Houston (Arista)
9	(10)	Gran Turismo	Cardigans (Stockholm)
10	(7)	Step One	Steps (Jive)

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● ***Caitlin Moran is unwell.***

The cyberspace cowboys ride out

Downloading from the Internet will spell the end of music as we know it



RICHARD CANNON

"If all music is instantly pirated how are we going to stay in business?" says Matt Black

It is nine o'clock on a Wednesday night. At a studio in London the electronica duo Coldcut are performing a session of music accompanied by visuals which goes out live on the Internet at www.piratetv.net. At the same time, a man in Cornwall tunes into an American alternative rock radio station called 97X, which serves the Cincinnati area from an adjoining university town in Ohio. He does this by tapping www.woxy97x.com into his computer service provider.

Meanwhile, in a village in northern Sweden, 100 miles from the nearest record shop, a woman accesses Boxman (www.boxman.com), an Internet retailer that claims to have cornered a 10 per cent share of the Scandinavian market in just two years, and orders the new CD by American underground band Sleater-Kinney. It will arrive through her letterbox by the weekend.

At the University of Victoria in Canada, an engineering student in search of a track from an old Aerosmith album does not even have to wait that long. Using MP3 technology, he downloads the song from one of the many illegal "jukebox" web sites which offer a wide variety of music, free of charge, as a "public service" to Internet users.

You don't have to understand how all this is done to realise that monumental changes are afoot in the music industry. "People think it's years away," says marketing consultant Jon Webster. "It's not. It's happening right now."

Consumers, it seems, cannot lose. Once the new technology has been invested in and mastered, a whole world of music is placed at their fingertips. No more trudging to the local record shop or wandering round the megastore in search of an album that may be out of stock or even deleted. And, once you know where to look in cyberspace, a lot of music can be acquired for the cost of a phone call.

But the benefits of these extraordinary developments may be less obvious to the copyright owners of the songs themselves. "It is a threat," Webster says. "People are downloading illegal digital copies of albums that have been posted on the Internet. That's theft. And in many cases it is the artists who are losing out even more than the record companies."

"All the major record companies see the Internet as a threat," says Andy Saunders, head of communications of the independent label Creation, whose boss Alan McGee was one of the first to predict that computer technology would radically alter the structure of the music business. "We wanted to put our own stuff on an MP3 site," Saunders says. "But Sony [which has a 49 per cent stake in Creation] asked us not to. Our attitude is that it's the Wild West out there, and we want to keep an open mind about it."

Even Matt Black of Coldcut, who has been "something of an evangelist for DIY digital culture", has misgivings about the spread of MP3 technology. "I'm in an ambivalent situation," he says. "I'm pleased that more people are making their own music and that there are alternative forms of distribution, but as an artist and owner of my own record label [Ninja Tune] I make a living out of selling music. If all music can become instantly pirated and that becomes acceptable, how are we going to stay in business?"

But if the artists and record companies are feeling vulnerable, then what of the high street retailers? There will always be artists making the music and record companies which will devise a way of marketing it for a profit. But if everyone were to buy music direct from the source, so to speak, presumably it would be the end of record shops as we know them.

Jonathan Rees, the chart, rock & pop manager of HMV UK, speaks for many when he says he believes the likelihood of such a radical development is remote. "I don't think downloading and Internet retailing will ever take off to that degree," Rees says. "People will always enjoy the process of buying music from a record store."

"It's only a threat if you don't embrace it," says Elspeth Thomson, marketing director of Tower Records, which is preparing to open a string of "express" stores in which customers will be able to choose and order the music they want to buy from an online music database. The system will also include a feature called Tower Unflogged, which will give unsigned bands the chance to post samples of their music on the website and thereby gain exposure and feedback.

Perhaps this is the future, a system whereby retailers, artists and record companies work together to make the most of the expanded opportunities which the Internet has to offer. Jimmy Devlin, MD of Globalfulfillment.com, a rapidly growing Internet retail facilitator, believes so.

"New technology is always greeted with suspicion by the record industry," he says. "Home taping didn't kill music, and video didn't kill the movies. They tapped into a new market. It's the same with the Internet and online retailing. It's a value-add situation."

DAVID SINCLAIR

● *Coldcut play the Forum, London NW5 (0171-284 2200) next Friday. The show can be viewed live on www.piratetv.net.*

Everyday voices of Ulster

A unique radio series is revealing a legacy of pain, says its producer John O'Neill

Hundreds of people affected by the Troubles in Northern Ireland, whose tales have never previously been told, are describing their experiences in an ambitious series of interviews for Radio Ulster.

Late last year, as plans for the series fell into shape, Anna Carragher, head of broadcast at BBC Northern Ireland, rightly described the *Legacy* project as "a voice for the voiceless".

For producers, the early discussions on any broadcast can be daunting. The *Legacy* project was more intimidating than most. As co-producers, Elizabeth Kelly and I faced the task of putting together 365 interviews, each edited down to two minutes, for broadcast daily throughout 1999 in a prime-time slot on Radio Ulster.

It was clear from the start that we had to be open-minded and allow each speaker to put forward their thoughts on the events. This required sensitivity — there was no doubt that some of the material would upset sections of our audience: in Northern Ireland what is a victim to one group is often seen as a legitimate target by the other. It became obvious that our impartiality would be severely tested.

Last autumn Elizabeth and I, along with line manager Kieran Hegarty, set about working out how to present such stories. We needed to reflect all shades of opinion and experiences. In Northern Ireland there is hardly a person who has not been affected by the Troubles, so we began with the people we knew, explored contacts and talked to community and victim support groups. We set up a contact line and encouraged people to come forward with stories. We made it clear that we were not seeking politicians, campaigners or anyone who could be thought of as having a "public profile". In the early days I spoke to several callers who had suffered but had made contributions to the media. I explained to one woman that her appearances in the media had given her a profile and that while I in no way wished to demean the deaths in her family, I would not be recording her. "I understand," she replied. "You want to talk to people who haven't had a chance to speak. That's OK."

January I loomed large on the calendar and we had set ourselves a target of five interviews to be recorded and edited each week. It was hard to make the target as the public had no concept of how it worked. I flew to England to record soldiers who had served here; Elizabeth talked to victims' groups. We travelled hundreds of miles each week. The material shocked both of us.



Every day this year John O'Neill and his Radio Ulster team are broadcasting the tales of people affected by the Troubles

Some people had never spoken so frankly to a stranger, for others it was the first time that they had got to grips with the enormity of what had happened to them. We found ourselves in an unusual role as we talked to people who wanted someone to explain why it had all happened. I now carry the telephone numbers of bereavement counsellors.

We went on air and waited for the reaction — it didn't take long. The first call complained of bias towards the security forces. I explained that the caller might wait a few months and then reflect on our coverage. We now get a steady positive feedback. The latest was a call from the man who co-ordinated the Omagh trauma team. He felt that *Legacy* was a positive contribution.

The most recent member of our team, Aislinn Duffield, described to me her shock at some of the details given to her. I identified with her feelings. I spent ten years doing social work with young people who had problems relating to authority, and who were often easy targets for recruitment by paramilitary groups. I had assumed that I had a detailed knowledge of Northern Ireland, its people and their problems. I was wrong.

I am stunned by the detail of what has happened to some people I interview: the savagery that has been inflicted on them: the farmer who reluctantly left the land after two gun attacks; the grief of a woman whose mother 25 years ago left to go shopping and died in a bomb blast; the family who want to know why their son could not have been arrested instead of being shot?

I was taught to maintain a "professional detachment" from the detail of my work, but it's difficult as the enormity of the wrongdoing pours out. But what astounds me most is the forgiveness and the willingness to understand and move on. *Legacy* has become a small part of that process.

● Legacy *is broadcast daily at 8.58am on Radio Ulster.*

'WE HEARD THE EXPLOSION NEAR US — IT WAS DEFINITELY A BOMB'

"This is on November 23, 1988. We were sitting in the house on a Wednesday night when a bomb went off — we heard the explosion near us. It was definitely a bomb. My father had been seen near the barracks around that time and I got a wee bit worried and started inquiring, did anyone see my father's car coming up the street or near the barracks. But no one seemed to have seen it.

"So, they had noticed the gate leading into the field opposite the barracks had been ... the posts had been warped and badly twisted. So I decided to go into the field and see was anyone in the field. So, there was a priest from a monastery near us — he was already coming through the gate beside me with a huge flash lantern. We come on — what I can describe as just ... what was left of a human being. But I knew by the legs that it was my father. Then we come on what was my niece. Now she wasn't as bad as my father, but she was also dead. We had discussed who was going to tell my brother-in-law about his daughter. So it was left to me to go and tell him, and it was one of the hardest things that ever I have done in my life — to tell a man that his daughter was dead. They talk about people being shot or bombs going off here and there. Well, on television, every time I see one of them, I still relive the night that my father and niece was killed. I still relive that night."

● *Anonymous broadcast on March 2.*

L!ve and let die?

TWO journals cast doubt on the future of L!ve TV, Mirror group's cable channel. **Marketing** reports that L!ve's losses are running at £9 million "and with predators circling, it seems only a matter of time before Mirror Group pulls the plug ... Signs are that it won't be around to broadcast New Millennium Topless Darts." In **Broadcast** the headline is "End of the Line for L!ve?", but the magazine weighs in with good news for the beleagured channel: the first sale of one of its programmes, *Lie Detector*, to ITV.

■ TONY SCOULLER, the marketing director of the drinks firm UDV, sparked a lively debate in a speech doubting the value of advertising spirits on TV. **Marketing Week** reports that, since the voluntary ban on spirits advertising was lifted five years ago, the hard stuff has commanded a dwindling share of the drinks market. Last year £42 million was spent by liquor firms on TV ads, but sales still fell. The magazine



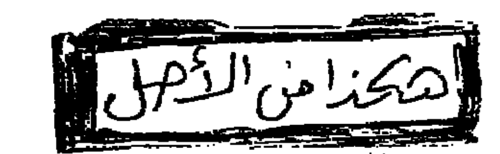
says that Scouller "may have dealt the glamorous world of TV advertising a blow from which it will be hard to recover".

■ CHANGING FACES: Chris Mann, sacked as editor of News Direct 97.3FM, to sue London News Radio, alleging unfair dismissal; Joe Murphy from *The Mail on Sunday* to be political editor of *The Sunday Telegraph* **(Press Gazette)**. John Coyle splits from old PR partner Brian Basham to found Clerkenwell Communications with Emma Kane **(PR Week)**. Tony Cox quits as creative director of BMP DDB to take senior role in creative department at Abbott Mead Vickers BBDO **(Campaign)**.

■ GETTING THE BUSINESS: Shell launches £20 million campaign using J Walter Thompson and the PR firm Fishburn Hedges **(Marketing)**. Acacia Expeditions engages the Travel PR Company to handle media relations after six of its clients were killed in Uganda **(PR Week)**.

MICHAEL LEAPMAN





'Shows for the family are hard to find'

Claudia Rosencrantz brought us 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire?' What else is up her sleeve, asks **Carol Midgley**



Winning formula: "I knew instinctively that *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* would work," says Claudia Rosencrantz

This should have been a week of unqualified triumph for Claudia Rosencrantz, ITV's controller of entertainment. *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?*, the addictive TV game show has just started its third series and achieved record audiences of nearly 19 million.

But rather than basking in glory, ITV's press office was coping with the embarrassing revelation that a contestant who won £125,000 had actually answered one of his questions incorrectly. The show's producers failed to notice but hundreds of viewers telephoned ITV and national newspapers to register the blunder.

While it may have slightly dulled the shine of the show's success, the incident is unlikely to wipe the smiles off the faces of ITV executives. The programme, initially denounced as immoral for offering £1 million as a quiz prize, is proving to be ITV's golden goose. A recent show pulled in 18.8 million "live" viewers, a figure expected to rise to 19.3 million when video recordings are taken into account. If so, it will break the record held by a 1977 edition of *Mastermind*, seen by 19.1 million.

It seems all the more remarkable then that the programme idea sat on Rosencrantz's desk for two years before it was put into production. When she first proposed it in 1996, ITV management felt that there were too many game shows. ITV was enjoying success with family shows such as *Wheel of Fortune* and *Play Your Cards Right*.

But Rosencrantz, convinced that the show would be a hit, persuaded its production company, Celador, to be patient. When David Liddiment took over as the director of programmes in late 1997 she pitched the idea again. Liddiment commissioned it immediately. The show, in which contestants answer 15 general knowledge questions to accumulate £1 million, was originally titled *Cash Mountain*. Rosencrantz disliked this name and it became *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?*, partly because she likes the song of the same name. "I knew instinctively it would work and David has given us a brief to go with what we believe in," she says.

Rosencrantz began her career at *The Sunday Telegraph* magazine and *Elle*, and later met David Montgomery, then Editor of *News of the World*, at a party. They were the only sober people there, and Montgomery offered her a job on his paper's magazine. In 1986 she joined LWT as a researcher in the entertainment department. This spawned an eight-year working relationship with Barry Humphries, alias Dame Edna Everage. She went on to work with Chris Evans on *Don't Forget Your Toothbrush* and did an 18-month stint in the BBC factual department before returning to ITV in late 1995.

After three years in the job, Rosencrantz, 39, who commissioned such shows as *The Shane Ritchie Experience* and *Moment of Truth* (dubbed sadistic because it parades prizes in front of children, then snatches them away if their families fail to meet the challenge) is accustomed to hearing herself labelled the queen of the "tacky" Saturday night game show. But she says tacky is not necessarily a dirty word and that those who curl their lips at "uncynical" shows that appeal to a mass audience are elitist.

"The hardest thing is finding programmes that the entire family can watch together," she says. "*Millionaire* is a straightforward, uncynical show — look how the audience has reacted. People say *Moment of Truth* is cruel to the children who appear but if you talk to the kids, they are not really upset. We have already commissioned another series."

Now that ITV has promised advertisers that is going upmarket and will draw in a wider and younger audience, her challenge will be to find shows that fit that profile but remain the traditional Saturday evening TV "event".

Rosencrantz, who has a nine-month-old daughter, Lola, with her husband, the actor and writer Daniel Abineri, also has a knack for knowing when shows are on their last legs. It was her decision to axe *Beadle's About*, the much vilified hoax show, and she recently announced the end of *Gladiators*, one of the big success stories of the Nineties. Meanwhile, the BBC is dispensing with *Noel's House Party*, another veteran of the Saturday evening schedule.

"Programmes have a natural lifespan, you must know when to call it a day," she says. "*Gladiators* has been brilliant, as has *House Party*, but people tire of things. Audiences are very television-literate these days; you can't underestimate that."

This raises the question of whether the audience will stick with *Millionaire* if nobody scoops the £1 million jackpot. So far the most won is £125,000. But public confidence in the show seems not to have been dented by this week's glitch (contestant Tony Kennedy gave 24 as the minimum number of strokes with which a tennis player can win a set. He was told he was right, although the correct answer is 12).

"It was a genuine mistake and we apologised for it," Rosencrantz says. "There was no soul-searching on our part over whether the contestant should keep the money — it was our mistake. But the checking procedures have been reinforced as a result."

Whether its success continues remains to be seen. "I think it has a way to go yet. The public certainly isn't bored by it. Even I can't stand to miss a show."

The bucks stop here

Hollywood studios want cheaper stars, says **Boyd Farrow**

The average cost of making and marketing a Hollywood movie is now a staggering $78 million (about £52 million), according to the Motion Picture Association of America. While the bill for producing a typical Hollywood film fell by 1.4 per cent to $52.7 million in 1998, the cost of marketing and distributing it soared, leaping by 13 per cent to $25.3 million.

The slight dip in production costs is attributed to the studios being in "one of their periodic fits of cost control". Another reason is that major stars and directors are agreeing to forgo their initial fees in return for a slice of the box-office spoils. Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg, for example, may earn $80 million between them from their cut of *Saving Private Ryan* ticket sales, eating into the studio's profits.

But Hollywood's belt-tightening clearly has not extended to movie marketing, the cost of which has escalated by 44 per cent over the past five years. Such expenditure on hype reflects the fact that many of the 250 or so studio films released each year earn 40 per cent of their American revenue during their first weekend. If they fail to ignite, they are removed swiftly to make way for other films. During the past few years, the studios have relied on a handful of big stars to "open" a picture — and big-star salaries have rocketed.

In 1994, two days before *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective* opened, Time Warner-owned New Line Cinema refused to pay the film's unknown lead, Jim Carrey, $1 million to star in another project, *Dumb & Dumber*. Two weeks later, when *Ace Ventura* proved a hit, New Line was forced to shell out $7 million for Carrey to star in the same movie. His fee for *Ace Ventura* was $300,000. In the next 12 months, price competition for top names went berserk.

On Monday, Bill Mechanic, the chairman of Fox Entertainment, told film convention delegates that the stars who now command $20 million fees or 20 per cent of the box-office gross are pricing themselves out of the market. He said that all studios were slashing movie budgets and salaries, pointing to 20th Century Fox's use of such unknowns (at the time) as Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet for *Titanic*.

Mechanic's observations are borne out by the poor performance of big-star, big-budget titles such as *Lethal Weapon 4* and *The Avengers* in 1998. Disney's most profitable film last year was the $19 million comedy *The Waterboy*, starring the unknown Adam Sandler, which grossed almost $100 million. At the same time a spate of cheap and cheerful horror films, cast with teen TV idols, were among the most profitable films for years. Not surprisingly, Hollywood is now falling over itself to produce low-budget, youth-orientated films.

But, of course, today's youth heroes will be tomorrow's mega-earners: Leonardo DiCaprio is pocketing $20 million to star in *The Beach* for Mechanic's studio.

The Net: so much, so fast — so what?

Brian MacArthur
PAPER ROUND

Once you're hooked on the Internet, surfing can become a compulsion — and if you're a journalist, you can't stop brooding on its implications for newspapers. Are there profound lessons we ought to be learning?

So I offer no apology for returning to subject of the Net, especially in the week of the Budget, which I tried to follow from the online editions of Britain's national newspapers. Could I get an *Evening Me*?

I signed on to the Press Association, *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Electronic Telegraph*, the *Financial Times*, *The Independent*, *The Express*, *The Mirror* and *This Is Money*, the *Daily Mail* and *The Mail on Sunday* sites. So far as I could detect, *The Express*, *The Mirror* and *The Independent* had not attempted to run live reports but the rest competed to tell the story as it happened, offering regular news bites as Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, was speaking, except that *The Electronic Telegraph* waited until the Budget was over.

Some of the papers were less than helpful in signalling to a novice where to find the Budget report. *The Times* had two Budget links, including onward links to the Inland Revenue, Treasury and Customs and Excise sites, but I got to just one, and then only because its editor had told me where to look.

I could not get any news from *This Is Money* until 6pm, even though it was running news flashes from 4pm. And I never cracked the *FT* site — almost certainly because it was in heavy demand. I have, however, been getting its budget e-mails for the past two days.

So the easiest to find and use as an online evening newspaper for this novice were the PA and *Guardian* sites. Both were running news flashes from the moment the Chancellor started speaking, with PA also offering a live video link. By 6pm *The Guardian* had also published a commentary on the Budget by Anthony Browne, *The Observer*'s economics correspondent. *The Times* was updating until 2am and *The Mail on Sunday* was running tax tables from Price Waterhouse by 7pm. Yet the find of the day was the outstanding BBC website, which beat them all — hardly surprising, given that it has 100 staff against four for PA and *The Guardian*.

Yet even by fumbling round the Net, I had assembled an *Evening Me* by 6pm and well before *The Nine O'Clock News* I had an A4 Net "newspaper" with as much information as the next morning's papers, including the full text of Brown's speech.

To all of which, one of my responses is: so what? For nothing in my *Evening Me* could match the sheer joy of spreading out the newspapers next morning — so much easier than searching through them all on the Net — and seeing on display all the different voices of the British press. *The Sun*, with its front page announcing "Everyone's A Winner — Guaranteed Prize for Every Reader" or *The Mirror*, with "Flash Gordon — He's helped every woman, every man, every child, every one of us". The *Daily Mail* accused Brown of a "tragic misjudgement" by new Labour on marriage and the family; in *The Guardian* Polly Toynbee described him as the "children's Chancellor".

Without endlessly clicking a mouse, I could revel in the commentators — Anatole Kaletsky and Simon Jenkins in *The Times*, Hugo Young in *The Guardian*, Andrew Marr and Charles Whelan in *The Express*, or Paul Routledge in *The Mirror* and obtain a quick sense of Brown's obvious political triumph.

With every new technological development, journalists seek some profound or threatening effect on newspapers. I am not sure there are any. Yet newspapers obviously can't rival the Internet for speed, and the Net appeals to a young constituency who aren't natural newspaper readers and whom editors are desperately trying to reach. So they are going to have to improve and speed up their act and think more imaginatively if they want to compete online with such news organisations as the BBC. That also means selling star columnists on the Net and linking online newspapers direct to newspaper newsrooms. Net readers, as Simon Waldman of *The Guardian* says, are promiscuous and return only to sites that deliver.

Newspapers obviously cannot compete with the sheer volume of information on the Net — but they can, as *The Times* now does, publish links to the Web from news and features. So one major role for the newspaper, as access to the Net becomes universal, will be to help readers to navigate the Net's avalanche of information.

I want to be complacent about the Net but I can't. On Tuesday, the *FT* had a record number of new registrations and its site and *The Guardian*'s were visited by more than 50,000 readers, while PA recorded a 300 per cent increase in page impressions. Something significant is going on out there in cyberspace but nobody yet knows what to do about it.

From Goldeneye to golden Eyre

Maggie Brown's
MEDIA DIARY

IF YOU tuned into *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?*, *A Touch of Frost* or *Goldeneye* this week, you are doing your bit to aid ITV's ruthless drive to reverse its fortunes, causing painful gasps among competitors.

When Richard Eyre, chief executive of the ITV network, set a target of 39 per cent of peak evening viewing 12 months ago for 1999 he was called brave to his face, mad behind his back. Now, he tells me, the running total so far this year is a 40.4 per cent share with a majority of new series in the top ten. And that is before the impact of shifting *News at Ten*. Adverts for the next Director-General of the BBC go out this weekend. Eyre is near the top of the list.

■ "IT'S like Bank Holiday every night," lamented a senior BBC1 executive as he watched the channel's share collapse nightly. The ending of *News at Ten*, clearing four hours for prime-time entertainment, represents a major shift in the ground rules of British TV. But it is not all down to banishing news. BBC1's performance last Sunday, a shattering reduction in share to 21 per cent, has led to heart-searching over whether Peter Salmon, controller of BBC1, should have insisted that *The Lakes* run on Sundays. Lots of swear words had to be cut to make it suitable for a Sabbath, which explains some strange "out of lip synch" sequences. It wasn't just bad dubbing.

■ I WATCHED the launch of the new *ITV Evening News* at 6.30pm with Baroness Thatcher on one side, and Sir Denis on the other, at a lavish party thrown by ITN. They were unimpressed with the opening ten-minute photo opportunity given to Gordon Brown and wandered off with Michael Portillo. It struck me that Labour grandees were in short supply. The explanation? The Government remains rankled by the Independent Television Commisison's (ITC) decision to allow *News at Ten* to go. The ITC's standing as regulator of all UK commercial television is not high either. I am told that that is why Lord Holme of Cheltenham, the former Lib Dem Northern Ireland spokesman, and trusted Blairite "gofer", has become deputy chairman of the ITC. Government Ministers are also raising eyebrows over the ITC's current consultation to see whether Internet content can be regulated. It is seen as pointless.

■ AMID all the publicity given to Carlton's purchase of Planet 24 from Sir Bob Geldof and Lord Alli, note that it is the first and certainly not the last deal by Steven Cain, Carlton Communication's new chief executive. He joined arch-Tory Michael Green's TV company in January, after serving as marketing director for Asda. Green has a reputation to live down — as being hard to work for. Insiders gasp that they have seen him defer to Cain during meetings. Will this partnership flourish or founder?

■ WHAT is the mystery that accompanies any *Big Fight Night* on Sky? Why, the time of the event! Adverts for this weekend's Holyfield/Lewis encounter abound, but don't say when the main action from Madison Square Garden is likely to be. Sky is always curiously coy on this point. The reason, of course, is that it thinks it will put off viewers if it says fans will have to stay up until 5am, for example. But this is downright inconvenient when accurate information would allow fans to choose between going bed and getting up early or staying up. I declare an interest. My husband buys all Sky's pay-per-view boxing events. I'm fed up with the way it ruins Sunday. The rules of PPV television differ from free TV. More information please — boxing fans are highly motivated.

■ TREVOR McDONALD assures me that ITV's new current affairs show, *Tonight*, will now start on April 9 — and he's fronting it. But there is tension between ITN and Granada, which insists that the show belongs to the Manchester-based company. It wants to launch with some big exclusive stories in the can.

● *maggiebrown.media@btinternet.com*

media times

And now . . . the ex-girlfriend of the boyfriend of the wife of the boyfriend of Anthea







The chain of lovers that the tabloids find irresistible: clockwise from left, Carissa Mitchell, Anthony Constanduros, Della Bovey, Anthea Turner and Grant Bovey

The enduring obsession with the love lives of Anthea Turner and Grant Bovey is becoming absurd, says **Carol Midgley**

"Martyrdom," wrote George Bernard Shaw in *The Devil's Disciple*, "is the only way in which a man can become famous without ability."

This week, however, *The Mirror* has shown us that, in the modern age, there is another, far simpler method. On Tuesday it devoted the whole of page three to a story about Carissa Mitchell, a former girlfriend of Della Bovey's new boyfriend.

Della Bovey, you will remember, is the estranged wife of Grant Bovey, the new boyfriend of the television presenter Anthea Turner.

Just to recap, then, that's a whole page of a national daily newspaper taken up by the former girlfriend of the new boyfriend of the estranged wife of the new boyfriend of the current presenter of the *Wish You Were Here* holiday programme. Confused? Well, who wouldn't be?

The tenacity of newspapers in wringing the very last drops from a juicy story is legendary. But Fleet Street's current obsession with the Turner/Bovey story has shown to what absurd lengths the pursuit of the modern celebrity can go.

When Turner first announced that she and Bovey, a father of three, were leaving their spouses to set up home together, there were those who questioned whether this was really a story worthy of front-page splash news. Whether one agrees or not, how relevant can it be now 15 months down the line and four stages removed from the celebrity herself?

The Mirror was far from being the only newspaper which was prepared to invest time and money on seeking out Anthony Constanduros, the new "toyboy lover" of Mrs Bovey. Last week a pack of journalists descended on Constanduros's home in West Sussex, some of whom admitted to being privately bemused at the ferocity with which the newsdesks were chasing the story.

Constanduros was so taken aback that he asked family friend Harry Conroy, a media adviser and former leader of the National Union of Journalists, to manage the situation.

Conroy, who did not ask for a fee, used the Press Association to put out a photograph of Constanduros to stop the media chase. It was accompanied by a statement pleading for privacy as well as a reminder of the privacy clause in the Press Complaints Commission Code.

"The situation was ridiculous," says Conroy. "I'm a journalist but I just couldn't see the story. Anthony is an ordinary guy but they were offering members of his family — even his grandmother — sums of £20,000 to talk about him. It went on for days. He was shocked. He could not believe how much interest there was in him, never mind his former girlfriend."

For now, the story has died down, and Carissa Mitchell, who was able to tell us riveting details like she and Constanduros used to "go to local pubs or stay in and cook", has had her 15 minutes of fame.

But at least she cannot be accused of doing a kiss-and-sell. As is expected of celebrities these days, Mitchell asked instead that a donation be made to Comic Relief.

Little voice making big waves

It is not often that the little man chasing an impossible dream succeeds. But Noah Samara, an Ethiopian-American, is getting close. It was surely wildly implausible for a private citizen to suggest that you could revolutionise communications and entertainment in the Third World by sending up three private-sector satellites — one each for Africa and the Middle East, Latin America and Asia — devoted to radio.

It has taken him nearly ten years but, last Friday, anyone jogging through St James's Park in Central London could have seen a small, excited group of people pointing an unusual-looking radio towards the sky. Coming in loud and clear from the first WorldSpace satellite, launched in November, was digital radio direct from Johannesburg.

The satellite is aimed at the African continent but is performing so well that the signal can be picked up in Europe as well. Two more satellites will be launched later this year as part of a project worth more than $1 billion.

The success of Samara, based in Washington DC, is a tribute to dogged determination. But formidable problems remain — the most obvious of all is to persuade people to buy the special radio receivers which have built-in satellite antenna. Financial realities — the cost of the receivers in particular — have forced Samara to drift far from his original concept: to provide communications for the information-deprived poor.

With receivers costing between $250 and $300, the initial target audience is affluent South Africans in remote places and the oil-rich of the Middle East. It is hoped that early sales will drive down the cost of the receivers so that a wider audience can afford them. Samara's goal is 500,000 receivers in use by the end of the first year of service. His philanthropic goals have not been abandoned entirely. About 5 per cent of the capacity of the satellites will be available to groups such as the World Health Organisation to broadcast educational material.

Samara will struggle in his drive to turn WorldSpace into a serious business but the consequences, should he succeed, could be profound. The receivers will soon be able to receive vast amounts of digital data, including the text of newspapers, which can be downloaded in seconds.

■ First indications, apart from the obviously untypical Budget Day, is that viewers will get considerable choice at 6pm and 6.30pm in the news agendas on offer from the BBC and ITV. On Monday, the first day of the new regime, the BBC offered stories such as the right to roam in the countryside, the problems with breast implants and the Northern Ireland deadline extended.

ITV carried stories such as a less-than-totally revealing interview with the Chancellor, Sir Bernard Ingham's contretemps with his neighbour, and a special on teenage female smokers.

A clue to what was going on came from Stewart Purvis, the chief executive of Independent Television News, interviewed for Channel 4's *And Finally* programme: "The dynamic is really news attracting the kind of audiences that advertisers want to buy, and the channel controllers sitting there saying 'If I want those kind of advertisers, I need this kind of content. I need the news to deliver this kind of audience.'

"This is complete heresy, of course, to the founding fathers of television news who believed that you had a public service."

Indeed it is.

Raymond Snoddy

Give News 24 a chance

Critics of the 'unseen' channel say it is bleeding the BBC dry. But **Roger Mosey** argues that they are misinformed

Gerald Kaufman, whose book *My Life In The Silver Screen* accountably missed the bestsellers list, tells us that News 24 has "hardly any" viewers. Sir Paul Fox, the former Managing Director of BBC Television, writes in *The Daily Telegraph* (circulation just over a million) that BBC News 24 (watched by more than five million) is "unseen". And Sir Marmaduke Hussey, who takes some of the credit for launching Radio 5 Live as a round-the-clock channel for news and sport, thinks that what is right for radio is a step too far for television.

The sins attributed to News 24 by its critics are legion. The birth of the channel is claimed to be responsible for everything from budget cuts on *The World Tonight* to the loss of test cricket.

In fact, the most potent charge against the BBC is not that it launched News 24 but that it was late into a market which is vital for its future. The argument is simple. In homes with just the terrestrial channels, BBC News is watched for 1.49 hours per person per week but in households with cable and satellite that figure falls to 0.76 hours.

There is also a qualitative perception: multi-channel viewers are far less likely to think of the BBC as the first place they would turn to for fast, authoritative, breaking news. In those circumstances, the BBC had a clear choice. Either it could engage with the fact that audiences want news in a form and at a time convenient to them — or it could cling to the line that 1pm, 6pm and 9pm are the only times for the national news experience. It would, I believe, have been the greater arrogance if the BBC had stuck to a *table d'hôte* menu in an age of choice.

There is an argument that Sky News was there already, so there was no need for the BBC to wade in. I like Sky but I don't like the idea that it should be the only provider of 24-hour television news. I am equally opposed to the cable operators, mine included, who are dropping Sky News in favour of News 24. Choice should mean exactly that, and we want News 24 to win on its own merits and not because it is the only show in town.



Gavin Esler, BBC News 24's evening anchorman

And we believe that it is winning. Each week 5.1 million people watch News 24 either on its overnight BBC1 service or via cable and digital satellite. In digital homes it has rapidly established itself as one of the most watched channels.

The commentators who prefix "News 24" with the adjective "unwatched" would have to say the same for Sky if real viewing data were their source. That would be a nonsense, too, because audiences for continuous news channels are low at some times of the day. It is true of the American market as well as the UK. The power is with the consumer, and they may choose to watch at 9am or at 11.30pm. The aim is not to win millions of viewers at one time but to encourage people to use the channel over a period.

So is it the editorial failures of News 24 that provoke the criticism? It is true there were rough edges early on, and we paid a price for being too ambitious with technology. We had a choice, though. The BBC of the past would have steamed ahead with old working practices at a higher cost but News 24 embraces the digital era and is willing to push the boundaries of broadcasting.

That is not, however, at the expense of quality. I defy anyone who saw the joint News 24 and BBC World coverage of the funeral of King Hussein of Jordan to say that the new style of extended live broadcasting undermines our reputation. John Simpson and Brian Hanrahan led continuous global coverage, which made CNN look second-rate; from Northern Ireland to the sacking of Glenn Hoddle, News 24 has offered viewers direct access to stories as they unfold.

Alastair Campbell has a point about the virtue of the new services: with the decline of parliamentary reporting and the rise of the soundbite, there is a gain for democracy in allowing voters to be exposed to opinion-formers with arguments worth developing.

And can we afford it? As Ian Hargreaves, former Editor of *The Independent*, remarked: "You could buy a year of News 24 and the whole of the BBC's Internet service for less than the cost of Radio 3." Hard to see then how the channel could be responsible for bleeding the corporation dry.

News 24 is a channel for the future. That may sound like managerial bluster, so let me make three predictions. One: News 24 will have even more viewers in a year's time than it does now. Few channels can predict this, but we can. Two: it will enjoy the same change in perception as Radio 5 Live. What started as a derided shotgun marriage of news and sport is now Sony Station of the Year, recognised for pioneering a fresh approach to speech broadcasting. Three: within the next decade News 24 will become the first choice for BBC News, guaranteeing information when you want it in the digital era.

It is time to end the muddled thinking and misinformation about the channel. The creativity of the new generation seems to me infinitely preferable to the old British disease of carping from the sidelines.

● *Roger Mosey is Acting Director, Continuous News BBC*

Little voice making big waves

Get me a Yemeni chief on the phone

Chat show researchers have a hard time, but so do those on Today, says **Henry Bonsu**

Last week the BBC issued P45s to three members of staff and a freelancer from *The Vanessa Show* for using bogus guests including fake feuding sisters and fraudulent fat-fetishists. The sackings, after a BBC investigation, will heighten the fear and loathing among researchers working on such programmes.

One friend of mine who toils on a rival show has seen her workload rocket and morale plummet since her bosses insisted on new safeguards against hoaxers. The pressure to stop fakes slipping through is now so great that she hardly eats or sleeps.

Like many others, I imagine, who work on programmes such as *Kilroy* (BBC) and *Trisha* (ITV), she is seriously considering her future. Roger Bolton, the presenter of Channel 4's *Right to Reply*, has already spoken about the ridiculous demands on the researchers working for daily downmarket shows. But, as he must know, even on the most upmarket programmes, what is expected of a researcher can hover between the sublime, the ridiculous and the downright dangerous.

During a spate of kidnappings by Yemeni tribesmen four years ago, I was working on Radio 4's *Today*. I remember giggling nervously when a producer asked me to get an English-speaking Yemeni tribal leader on the end of a satellite phone for 7.30am the following day. He wasn't joking.

If I had known then what I know now, perhaps I could have booked the leader through the agency that supplied *Trisha* and *The Vanessa Show*. Using traditional research methods, after four hours I had to tell the producer that we might have to make do with the Yemeni Ambassador to London. He gave me the look that every researcher dreads: "You've failed me."

Fear of *that look* drives most ambitious researchers the extra mile to "deliver" for their immediate boss, even if it means using slightly underhand means. I was so desperate to persuade the former Ulster MP Bernadette McAliskey to appear on *Today* that I casually mentioned the fact that I was black. Using the line from *The Commitments*, "The Irish are the blacks of Europe", certainly does not appear in the producer's guidelines, but it worked. Mrs McAliskey, who was furious with the BBC over her treatment by another programme, agreed to be interviewed by us the following morning.

The look can also push you to take nerve-racking risks. During the Parkhurst prison breakout a few years ago, a man telephoned claiming that he was Norman Parker, a former prison inmate and author of *Parkhurst Tales*. He said the escapers had obviously got their idea from his book about life inside. I had no idea whether he was telling the truth but I took down his details and excitedly passed them on to the duty editor.

"Is he genuine?" I was asked. "Oh, yes," I said, hoping, not having even seen the book. It was at the fag end of a 12-hour shift so there our conversation ended, both of us tacitly assuming that somehow it would get checked — by someone else. A few hours later I listened in terror as Parker gave the presenters an exhilarating account of his time in Parkhurst. What if he was a fake? Thankfully he was genuine. I got a pat on the back, and watched proudly as he did a tour of programmes, including the *One O'Clock News*.

More often than not, researchers who slip up during outlandish quests lack guidance from producers, who can be strangely reluctant to pass on the benefits of their experience. Researchers ask few questions, fearing they will be deemed "not up to the job". Because there is little or no formal training for the role — it is assumed that you can do it if you have a degree — most people stumble on blindly, praying that one of their hundreds of speculative calls will yield the desired interviewee.

Some years ago I was researching a programme on the Animal Liberation Front for a now defunct current affairs programme. The producer begged me to use my "on the ground" contacts to find a cell of the ALF from which we could interview someone. As any researcher knows, no rule- book can help. I had to plead with journalists who had previously covered the story, stake out suspected hangouts of radical vegans and give my home telephone number to anybody remotely connected with animal rights.

After two weeks of frustration I rang an old university friend who had apparently become an eco-warrior. She knew a hunt saboteur who, after some persuading, took my producer, reporter and myself to an Oxfordshire wood to meet three individuals in balaclavas and army fatigues.

But after returning to the office in triumph, I was grilled by the programme editor, who balked at the idea of giving them airtime.

To our dismay he told my producer and me that the ALF could not be interviewed on the ground that they were "terrorists who shouldn't be given the oxygen of publicity".

On another occasion I was asked to look into "tardive dyskinesia", an unpleasant side-effect of some antipsychotic drugs — a job any researcher could do by consulting the British National Formulary. But my reporter wanted to create a tabloid splash by getting a celebrity to confess that they, or a relative, had been treated with these drugs — and had then been afflicted with tardive dyskinesia.

So off went the speculative letters to high-profile pop stars and actors — all of whom were reputed to have either suffered from mental illness, stress, alcoholism or drug addiction, or to have it in the family. I had no idea whether they had even been treated with antipsychotics, let alone gone on to suffer from TD, but that didn't matter. It was a wild goose chase — one that probably caused the subjects some offence — but to the lowly researcher, even the most unhinged orders are still orders.

I realised that this was no longer the world for me when I found myself in Birmingham one night sitting in the car of a man whose nickname was "Killer". He told me wild stories about gun-carrying and extreme violence that made him ideal for a BBC item on black-on-black violence. But "Killer" was ruled out by a senior producer because he no longer carried a gun and I could not prove how dangerous he was.

Perhaps it would have helped if I had returned to the office with a bullet-ridden flak jacket or a sawn-off shotgun bearing his fingerprints.

So next time you pity the poor downmarket researcher, spare a thought for their upmarket cousin who is probably just as close to a nervous breakdown — and a P45.



A genuine guest gives his opinion of cross-dressers on *Trisha*. Researchers are under pressure to weed out hoaxers

Monica at the heart of a new plot

Nothing sells like a scandal — TV catches on to Washington's dramatic potential for ratings. Report by **Susan Karlin**

We may think that we have had enough of Monica Lewinsky, but LA thinks not. Her essence will live on in Hollywood, thanks to a new TV series expected to hit the US next autumn.

It's called *DC* (it was originally called *Interns*) and it's about young Washington DC interns. Despite the similarities, The WB Network, one of America's newer terrestrial channels, is tiptoeing around the obvious comparisons. "We want to stay away from the Monica thing," says a spokesman. "It's not a thing we want to *promote*."

The ensemble drama comes from Dick Wolf, creator of *Law & Order*, the Emmy-winning legal and crime drama, and the film writer John August. The WB has ordered a pilot and is expected to announce a series pick-up in the spring.

DC features luscious twenty-somethings — this is Hollywood, after all — embarking on low-level jobs in Washington. While Ms Lewinsky isn't expected to make an appearance herself, there will be plenty of sexual intrigue.

> There will be plenty of sexual intrigue — without Monica

"Isn't that what good-looking 23 and 24-year-olds do?" Wolf joked with reporters at a recent Television Critics Association (TCA) press tour in California.

Despite scandal-laced political films such as *Wag the Dog*, TV has tended to shy away from Washington as a backdrop. Shadowing a real scandal in a TV show is tricky as it risks following an already oversaturated media event and often pales beside a real-life counterpart. After the O.J. Simpson trial, Steven Bochco, creator of the TV police series *NYPD Blue*, attempted *Murder One*, a drama covering a year-long murder trial, which was hugely popular in Britain but lasted only a season in the US.

DC will focus less on politics and more on the ideals, moral choices, and their consequences, of young Senate aides, lobbyists, TV news producers and Supreme Court clerks.

"It's not party-orientated," Wolf told *Daily Variety*, an entertainment trade magazine. "I hope to get through 110 episodes without ever using the words Republican or Democrat. It's no more a political show than *LA Law* was a legal *show*."

Meanwhile, political scandal also inspired a two-part episode of *Law & Order* on NBC this spring. In it, a Kenneth Starr-like prosecutor takes on New York detectives in a plot that evokes images of the circumstances surrounding the real suicide of Vince Foster, the White House lawyer.

"It involves the discovery of a body in New York that looks like a suicide, then isn't, and is tied to the White House," says Wolf. "There is a special prosecutor who wants information that a detective doesn't think he has a right to. I wouldn't say that it evolved from the White House scandal, but it's in the national consciousness. We take the headlines not the body copy."

If *DC* is a success, The WB only half-jokes about controversy. You don't want to drive away advertisers, but nothing promotes a show like a scandal. It was the conservative backlash against *Married . . . With Children* that helped to put Fox TV on the map. "I don't think *DC*'s going to cause a boycott," jokes The WB's Susanne Daniels. "But I'm going to look for one."



; 24 a chance

Will we see ads on the BBC?



"ADMEN say no to more ads" is a possible headline for a story involving the resurrection of one of the oldest chestnuts in the UK media scene: a call for the BBC to take ads.

The cry is being heard at this week's annual British TV advertising sales conference (in Barcelona, naturally), and the battle is being led by the Incorporated Society of British Advertisers (ISBA), which represent the nation's advertisers. The issue is never far from the surface at the conference, one of the few platforms to which advocates for such a move have access each year. But ISBA is deadly serious about its call. What lies behind it is advertisers' natural desire to alleviate inflation in the cost of TV advertising airtime.

ISBA is preparing its submission to the Davies Committee on the funding of the BBC. In the past it has argued that some government advertising should be shifted to the corporation and that there should be limited advertising — three minutes a day in peak time, say. Its latest proposals will include demands that the BBC face the same commercial restraints as ITV.

Agencies have always resisted the ISBA's proposals. Research has found little enthusiasm for such a move, and agencies fear it will make the ad industry appear greedy (greedier!) in the public's eyes. Where the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA) concurs with the ISBA is in regard to commercial constraints. Agencies and magazine publishers bristle at the way the Beeb cross-promotes its magazines, for instance, and there's the matter of back-door sponsorship such as the Camelot. So expect much huffing and puffing about ads on the Beeb as the ISBA exerts pressure on agencies to support them, and agencies decline to do so. And there the matter will rest — until next year.

■ TBWA won overall gold at Wednesday's British Television Advertising Awards for its Sony PlayStation commercial "double life". Other winners included Guinness (the old Italian man in a swimming race), *The Independent* (the cinema commercial "litany"), and Lego, Yellow Pages and Sony Camcorders.

There's nothing terrible about this list of ads; they are well-made and have advertising ideas, but something about the winners bothered a few observers. It's not just that my own favourite, the VW Polo's "self-defence", got silver; it was more how out of kilter this list is with the ads that the public loves.


A still from Sony Playstation's winning ad

Ads such as those for Guinness, *The Independent* and, to a degree, PlayStation are born of fantastic technical virtuosity behind the camera and painstaking post-production magic in Soho editing suites. They achieve a perfectionism that the ad industry, with its extraordinarily high production budgets per second of screentime, has come to expect. They are not devoid of advertising ideas — though I'd argue that the Guinness and *The Independent* spots are beautiful films rather than great ads. The problem is that these are not the ads that have captured people's imaginations in the way the Gold Blend couple, Papa and Nicole, the Andrex puppy, and the Levi's and Tango series once did, and One 2 One and Walkers crisps do now.

Some formulas are bound to be popular in the living room — celebrities, furry animals and soap opera plots. There is no reason that awards juries should have to laud them just because they are popular. But the great campaigns of the past 25 years have managed to marry critical (ie, industry) acclaim with commercial and popular success.

Think back to Hamlet and Heineken, Carling Black Label and BT, Barclaycard and Tesco. That list is probably now headed by Walkers, One 2 One and Volkswagen, which won minor awards on Wednesday night. But there's no room for the likes of Peugeot: advertising the public likes, that sells cars in droves, but won't win a creative award — ever.

Next year, we'll probably see the more populist ads winning again. I hope so, because it would be dangerous for the ad industry to be even more self-congratulatory and insulated.

● *Stefano Hatfield is the Editor of* Campaign.

media watch

ITV PEAK TIME PERFORMANCE

Ratings % (0–35) by time, 18.30–23.00; lines labelled "Monday March 8" and "Monday March 1". Source: Unofficial overnight figures

ON Monday evening this week ITV unveiled its new evening schedule replacing *News at Ten*. According to unofficial overnight figures, the new *ITV Evening News*, at 6.30pm, slightly outperformed the previous Monday's edition of *News at Ten*. The first, brightly coloured *ITV Evening News* had an audience figure of 7.2 million, compared with 6.9 million for last Monday's *News at Ten*. Previously, ITV's *Early Evening News*, at 5.40pm, drew in around 4.5 million viewers.

Across the evening the rest of the peak-time scheduled ITV programmes also recorded slight weekly increases in their respective time slots. The uninterrupted drama and film slot at 9pm featured *Kavanagh QC*, which gained a 46 per cent (10.3 million) share of viewing.

ITV claims a 48 per cent share of viewing across the whole of the Monday evening; the network's target for this year is to achieve an average 39 per cent of peak-time viewing. The *ITV Nightly News*, at 11pm, was watched by 3.1 million viewers, which is roughly the same for the various different regional programmes shown at 11pm last Monday. *News at Ten* averaged around 5.8 million viewers.

● *MediaTel's online media information and analysis service is accessed via the Internet at http://www.mediatel.co.uk (0171-439 7575)*

THE TIMES
EDUCATION

Are your children ready for this?

Guides can boost revision for national curriculum tests, says **John O'Leary**

☐ National curriculum tests have assumed great importance and sales of the guides produced jointly by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, the Stationery Office and *The Times* have increased rapidly. Many schools now encourage home preparation. All three of the age groups tested nationally are covered by the series of paperback books, the only ones to include actual questions used in last year's tests. A single guide covers the assessment of seven-year-olds, and there are separate books for English, mathematics and science at 11 and 14.

This year's tests begin after Easter, but the guides are best used over an extended period to familiarise pupils with the form of assessment they can expect. The tests are the nearest that most children will come to a public examination before GCSE.

The questions below offer a flavour of the two guides for primary children. The guides sponsored by this newspaper are available in mainstream bookshops, as well as through the offer at the foot of this page.



Ann Moss with Charlotte Atkins and Shuabor Rahman of Blue Gate Fields Primary School, East London

KEY STAGE ONE: 6-7 YEARS

National testing conjures up an image of nervous children sitting in rows and working furiously. At the age of seven, at least, it is not like that. The assessment regime has been designed to get the most out of children by mirroring normal classroom activity.

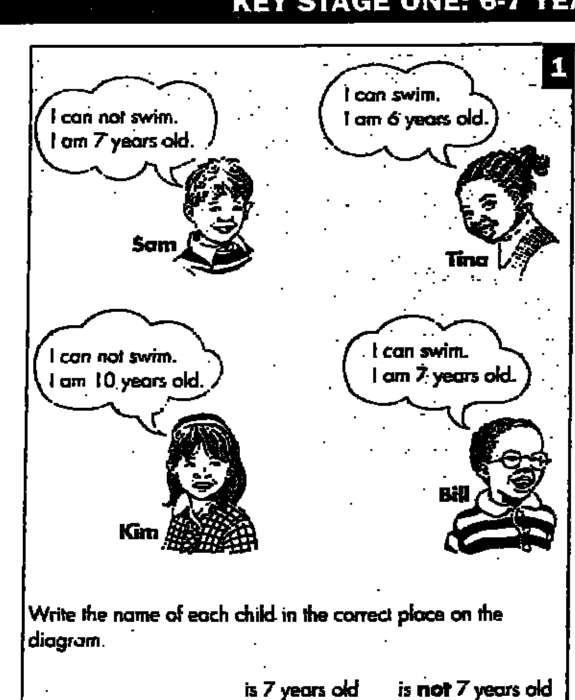
The process, which marks the end of Key Stage One of the national curriculum, takes place over several weeks. Although there are formal tests in mathematics, reading and spelling, much of the assessment takes place in small groups with the class teacher.

Results in mathematics and spelling improved last year, but children continued to find writing the most difficult of the tasks set. Few used paragraphs, and adjectives and adverbs were rare in seven-year-olds' stories.

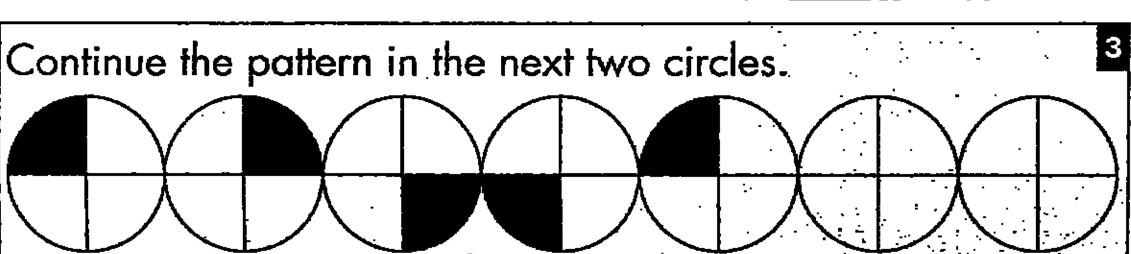
Most children coped well with simple words in the spelling test, but they had difficulty with vowel phonemes and double consonants that represent a single sound, such as in "suddenly".

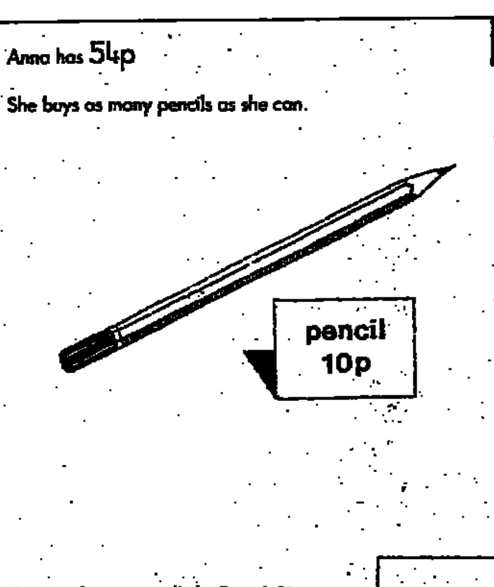
The mathematics test focused mainly on numbers, although there were some questions on data-handling and shapes. Just over half the children could work out the difference between 12 and 16, but fewer than half could calculate the change from 54p after buying five pencils at 10p each.

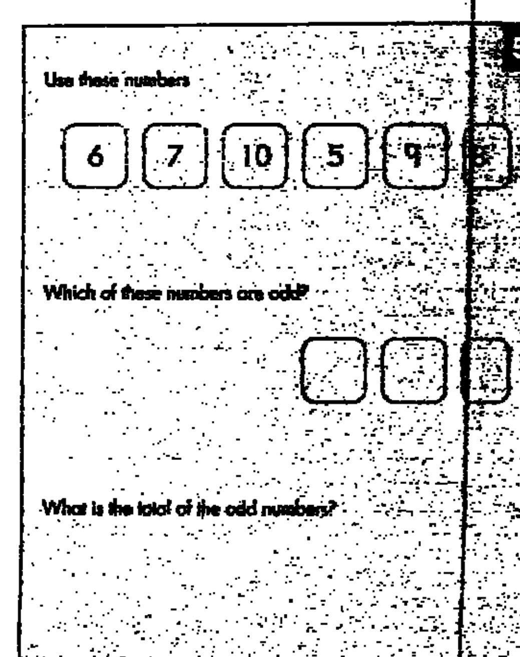
No major changes are planned for this year's tests.











KEY STAGE TWO: 10-11 YEARS

The tests marking the end of Key Stage Two of the national curriculum are the most sensitive set by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority because of their use in primary school league tables.

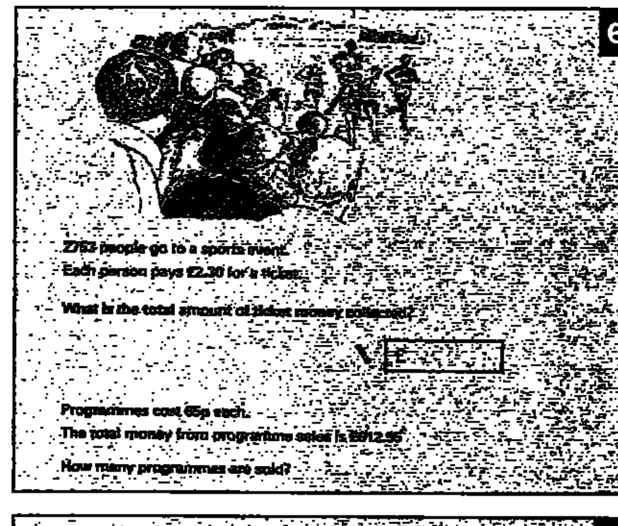
But they come too late in the year to be used for secondary school selection, or even the allocation of sets in most comprehensive schools.

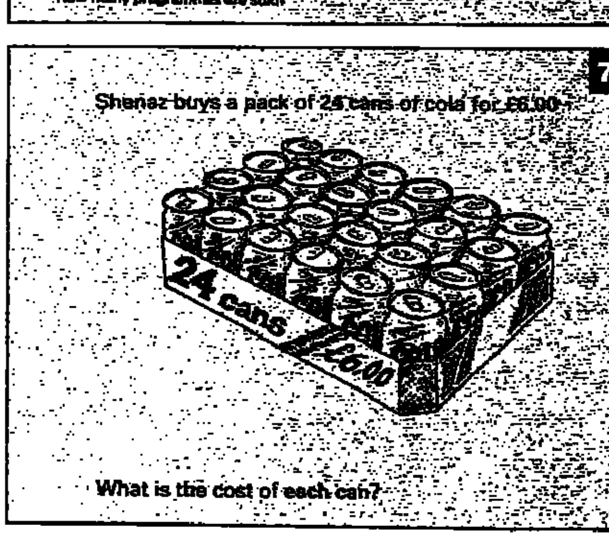
Eleven-year-olds encounter their first science tests, but English and, particularly, mathematics cause more problems. In spite of some improvement in results, only 65 per cent reached the expected Level 4 in English last year, while the success rate for mathematics slipped back to 59 per cent.

The new mental arithmetic test presented most difficulty. The 20 questions became progressively harder, and written work was discouraged but not penalised. Multiplication caused problems in the written tests but children were more secure when it came to addition and subtraction.

As at the earlier stage, 11-year-olds did better at reading than writing. In the spelling test, vowels caused most difficulty, especially in irregular words such as special and journey.

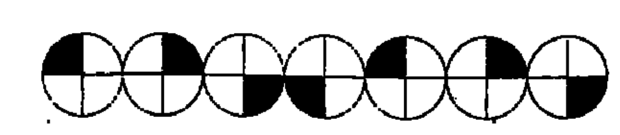
Children were more successful in science: 69 per cent reached the expected level for their age. As in maths and English, this year's tests will be similar to those set in 1998.



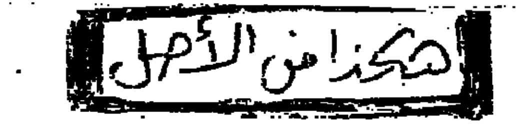


THE ANSWERS

1. Sam: I can not swim. I am 7 years old.
Tina: I can swim. I am 6 years old.
Kim: I can not swim. I am 10 years old.
Bill: I can swim. I am 7 years old.
2. The clock should show ten to seven.
3. See below.
4. Four pence.
5. Odd numbers are 5, 7, 9. Total 21.
6. Total ticket money collected is £6,331.90. Programmes sold: 943.
7. Each can costs 25 pence.







Why the Government needs mature students



The first clues to Labour's plans for the next Parliament emerged this week with the news that civil servants were examining the feasibility of half the population experiencing higher education by the age of 30. As big ideas go, it is pretty modest because up to 45 per cent of the age group already sample university or college courses. But it is a pointer to government thinking.

With mature students suffering from the introduction of tuition fees, graduate employment shaky and questions being asked about course quality, the benefits of further expansion can no longer be taken for granted. But the thinking that lay behind this week's Budget investment in "computers for all" also suggests that as many people as possible should take higher qualifications.

We may question whether the nation needs a further injection of sociology graduates or engineers, but even the current expansion of higher education is not about more of the same. The extra numbers planned at present are mostly in sub-degree courses for technicians and clerical workers, and often based in further education colleges rather than universities.

The longer-term model under consideration by David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, is designed to revive recruitment among mature students by combining full and part-time study in a new way. Part-time numbers have continued to grow at a time when the new fees have made older students think twice about taking a degree. A relatively short full-time introductory course followed by a longer period of part-time study would spread the costs more widely and might be seen as the best of both worlds by people who cannot afford a lengthy career break.

Unless there is a transformation in public attitudes to education, however, even such limited expansion of the university system will require some stimulation of demand. Predictably enough, students are becoming more hard-headed about the courses they take since the introduction of tuition fees. Although the new courses would probably be largely vocational, many of the twentysomethings the Government wants to attract will not have the necessary qualifications to benefit.

Conversion courses for those wanting to switch academic track and access courses for those who never got on to the track in the first place will be central to meeting the Government's target. But are they a serious preparation for higher education, or merely a way of covering up the poor quality of the intake at some universities?

A report published yesterday by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) is reassuringly positive. Not only does it signal new controls on the standard of access courses, but it finds that most have done well for their students. There is no information on the class of degree awarded to former access course students, but the report finds that they have been no more likely to fail or drop out than those entering by the conventional route.

First introduced 20 years ago, these access courses now involve more than 14,000 students. The subjects that access students choose subsequently tend to be those of national shortage, making the courses even more important in the future planning of ministers. About 85 per cent go on to degree programmes, most commonly in nursing, social work, teacher-training or computing. Almost all the students are over 21 and a higher proportion than on other courses come from ethnic minorities and poor families.

The QAA's new recognition scheme, which sets out to ensure that students reach a suitable standard for entry to higher education, should weed out the minority of courses that have put quantity above quality. If that can be guaranteed, many of the critics of expanded entry to higher education will be silenced and the Government's targets will be realistic.

'I worked so hard during my GCSEs, I rarely slept'

There is growing evidence that many pupils are becoming too competitive, writes **Hannah Betts**



Are our children becoming victims of a culture increasingly seeking perfection? Parents are often worried by the mania that comes with GCSE stress

Up at 7am. At work by 8. Home at 5pm. With family until 7. Work until 1.30 — short break — continue work to 3 in the morning. This is not the description of a day in the life of a merchant banker or City lawyer, but the self-imposed timetable of an industrious 16-year-old GCSE student.

Traditionally, A levels have been the great intellectual hurdle facing schoolchildren. But there is evidence that, for many youngsters, GCSEs may be more strenuous. In a system where even A grades can be starred, Britain's brightest 16-year-olds are becoming victims of a culture increasingly seeking perfection.

Eighteen-year-old Satim Razahusein, whose daily schedule begins this article, is a bright and ambitious A-level student who attends one of the leading schools in the West Midlands. Since Christmas, she has been studying for several hours a night. And twice a week she works through the night. Satim does not consider such practices exceptional; these are merely the working habits she picked up during her GCSEs.

"In my fourth year, in particular," she recalls, "I worked so hard that I rarely slept. I was making myself ill. Eventually, my form teacher did a survey to find out how much work we were doing on top of school lessons and the average was 30 hours a week. She told us to calm down."

Satim and her friends refused to accept this advice because the pressure to perform was internal. "No one made us work that hard," she adds. "My parents were worried, but there was nothing they could do: I would just shut my door and get on with it."

Satim gained ten As in her GCSEs, including five with stars, but still thinks that she could have achieved more.

Such anecdotal evidence that GCSEs are becoming the great testing point in a child's school career is supported by evidence from ChildLine, the national helpline for distressed children. Of those young people phoning about exam stress who declared their age, 61 per cent were in the GCSE age group. In contrast, 17-year-olds made up only 7 per cent of the statistic, and 18-year-olds, the age at which A levels are usually taken, only 4 per cent. In the aftermath of their traumatic GCSEs, many pupils appear to take A levels in their stride.

Student desire to achieve the coveted starred As is exacerbated by the fact that GCSEs are the only firm results for universities to use when offering places ahead of A level. For courses such as law and medicine, they have become a prerequisite. At the same time, bright children can overestimate the standards required to reach this level. Until the results of her mocks, Satim was convinced that she was going to get disastrous grades.

Continuous assessment may have been designed to remove the pressure from end-of-course exams, but for many children it has merely extended what could be termed perfection anxiety across two years. Some parents link this pressure with inter-school competition brought on by league tables. This has led to accusations that some schools may be encouraging children to give up subjects in which they are expected to do less well because their performance may blot an otherwise perfect record. Other parents accuse schools of making over-optimistic GCSE predictions to spur students on to the highest levels of achievement.

Schooled on the quick sprint of O level, parents can find themselves bemused by the mania that comes with GCSE stress. Jane Meades has watched three offspring sit GCSEs at comprehensives in St Albans.

"There is a lot of pressure now," she says. "Originally, it was confined to the competitive atmosphere at a few schools, but it's all of them now. And GCSE time can be hellish, with teachers thinking that their subject is the important one. As a parent, you feel helpless. I did have anxieties that they were overdoing it."

Parents used to become alert to these problems only as the exam season approaches. ChildLine's calls rise steadily from January. Help is also at hand from the Parent Network, a national organisation offering parenting education to 2,000 people a year. ChildLine has produced a leaflet that gives children rational advice on exam preparation. A supporting booklet, *Stressed Out*, offers advice to parents with sections on emotional support, danger signals and life beyond revision.

Valerie Howarth, the chief executive of ChildLine, summarises the problem: "Many GCSE pupils think that their whole future is swinging in the balance and some become suicidal. Children as young as 12 are calling the service with anxieties that their performance when it comes to GCSEs won't be good enough."

● *Children can call ChildLine on 0800 1111. For a free copy of* Exam Stress and How to Beat It, *contact ChildLine, Freepost 1111, London N1 0BR. The Parent Network is on 0171-735-1214.*

edpage@the-times.co.uk

Beam the class up, Nasa

A school has linked up with space, says **Iola Smith**



Mission control: Richard Palmer with fellow pupils

Russian cosmonauts have performed some unusual tasks during the turbulent lifetime of the *Mir* space station. But it is safe to assume that they never expected to be opening a Welsh comprehensive.

Later this month the orbiting craft will declare the rebuilt Stanwell School in Penarth, Vale of Glamorgan, officially open. The message will be received at the school by Yuri Glaskov, a cosmonaut from Moscow's Star City, and George Abbey, the director of Nasa. Both will address staff and students as part of Stanwell's space project.

The school's interest in space dates back to 1994 when Geoff Mules, old-boy-turned-Texan-businessman, decided to offer a bursary to allow sixth-formers to visit Nasa's space centre at Houston.

Richard Palmer, an A-level student who spent part of last summer in Texas, says: "We were taken around mission control, the astronaut training centre and Nasa's observatories. We even had a chance to use the simulators to overcome a 'challenge' at mission control such as piloting a craft with a broken component through space and into the Earth's atmosphere."

Richard was one of only a few students able to experience Houston at first hand. Chris Barber, Stanwell's deputy head teacher, was keen for all 1,400 pupils to benefit from the Nasa connection and so, as Stanwell's relationship with the space centre deepened, he hit on the idea of using the Internet to link the school with Nasa in a new way. So this term, Mr Barber and Mr Mules will launch a charity, the International Space School Foundation, at Stanwell.

Mr Barber explains: "We thought that Nasa's vast database could prove useful as a teaching tool in geography, science and psychology. But the difficulty would be trawling through the acres of material to find facts that would be relevant for, say, a 14-year-old studying volcanoes."

With assistance from the charity, the school will be able to establish a virtual exchange centre with Nasa. Teachers and technicians will be able to go through Nasa's data to extract features that are relevant for the national curriculum. The material, graded according to difficulty and tailored to the needs of specific age groups, will then be put on the Net to make it accessible to schools worldwide. *Doorway to the Universe* will be structured as a journey through space, stopping at locations that will include the Earth, the Moon and the planets. There will be opportunities to compare features such as radiation and volcanic activity between Earth and the Moon. Students of geography and environmental science, with their focus on Earth, will be able to take advantage of Nasa's picture library of Earth, with its quarter of a million photographs covering everything from hurricanes to the effects of El Niño.

Once the material goes on the Net, Stanwell hopes that other schools will use it, adding topics that they have been studying. "Our target," Mr Barber says, "is to have 2,000 schools using it by next year. We already have interest from schools in Britain and the United States."

Stanwell has long had electronic links with pupils in Sioux City, Iowa. Schoolchildren undertake joint research projects with their American e-mail penfriends and learn about each other's culture.

Enabling more pupils to experience a Nasa visit is the final part of Stanwell's space project. The hope is that, for the millennium, a planeful of British students comprising Stanwell pupils and others who have contributed to the Net pages will go to Texas, and students from participating American schools will visit Britain.

In the long term, as the international space station comes to fruition, expected experiments devised by British schoolchildren may be tested on board.

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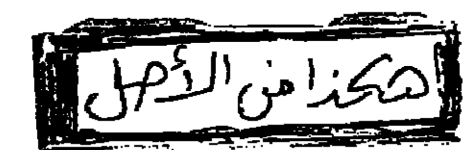
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HOCKEY
Clewlow can make crucial difference
By Cathy Harris and Sydney Friskin



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BY CATHY HARRIS AND SYDNEY FRISKIN

DENIS BAKER, the Canterbury coach, believes Mel Clewlow, the England defender, could be the key to the Kent women's club gaining promotion to the premier division. Canterbury have never played at the highest level, but if they beat Bradford in their final national league fixture tomorrow, they will be promoted as first-division champions.

Baker, the England Under-16 coach, admits that Canterbury have secured their place at the head of the table through "good, solid team performances from everyone", but picks out Clewlow, the centre back. "She's fitter and faster than I've ever seen her and her vision and delivery of the long ball have been superb," Baker said.

With 14 goals to her credit, second behind Tina Cullen, of Hightown, Clewlow's tally of 12 penalty corners is easily the best strike-rate in the league.

With four matches yet to be played in the men's national league premier division, Cannock are five points clear at the top of the table and seem a safe bet to finish there. The main obstacles in Cannock's path are out of the way. The three other teams in contention for the top four places are Southgate, Canterbury and Reading.

Reading, still without the injured Wyatt, will visit Old Loughtonians on Sunday with the same side that defeated Canterbury 6-3 last week.

With only two matches remaining in the first division, there should be an exciting race to finish in the top eight in order to survive in the division when the league is restructured next season.

☐ The International Hockey Federation (FIH) announced yesterday that Perth is to host the women's 2002 World Cup, with Kuala Lumpur staging the men's. Amsterdam is the venue for the 2000 men's and women's Champions Trophy.

Stains preaches the gospel of positivity

Rugby league hopes are rising in London, Christopher Irvine finds

In his office at the Stoop Memorial Ground, the electricity had gone off, but Dan Stains was oblivious to the cold. He had been up since 2am working on training ideas for his London Broncos side and was itching to get outdoors. "Everywhere you go, always take the weather with you," the Australian grinned.

That song came to mind at Hull Kingston Rovers, where an icy gale and belligerent lower-division opponents almost scuppered London's advance to the Silk Cut Challenge Cup quarter-finals. "It made me realise what a good team we've got, because Hull KR would have beaten anyone. It was blowing 40mph off the sea, it was their Wembley, and we had to find a way out," Stains said.

Martin Offiah located the escape route with the only try in a grinding 6-0 win. As well as the restoration of Offiah's scoring prowess after protracted injury, Stains knew, too, that his instinct in handing the captaincy to Shaun Edwards had been right. "There were times at Hull when we could have cracked, but Shaun kept us going," Stains said. "He's a powerful person and a natural leader."

The driven features of Edwards at training are not the only difference at the club since the charismatic Stains, 34, from Balmain, arrived in January. Trevor Howard, the club's long-serving football manager, said: "The place has never been as charged, nor the players quite so together, as under Dan."

His religious beliefs, of which much have been made, are not thrust down players' throats, though positive fervour abounds, and if they did not appreciate it before, the principle of sowing and reaping is ingrained.

Stains said: "The intuitive side of competition is what spirituality is about. When acting on instinct, you're acting on what I believe is your God inside you. It's why I don't plan too far ahead.

"I believe I was destined to be here. Part of my mission is to establish rugby league in London. We are building towards the vision of a dominant club. I don't set goals,

> 'We are building towards the vision of a dominant club'

but we can win the Super League this year, because we have the team to beat Wigan, Leeds, and the rest."

After a semi-final appearance last year and a season in which generally they flattered to deceive, Broncos' approach has been more low-key and their signings less flashy. The gradual anglicising of the club has continued with ten of the 25 squad now British.

Karle Hammond, from St Helens, forms a homegrown half-back combination with Edwards, while Dominic Peters, Wayne Sykes, James Brooks and Ed Jennings (the first rugby league player to emerge from the Isle of Wight) have been brought in from the development ranks.

Stains, who grew up on a dairy farm on the Darling Downs of Queensland, is a product of the outstanding Australian junior system. As a second-row forward, he represented Queensland and Australia and caught the bug for the British game during a six-month spell at Halifax in 1988, "when the Broncos were Fulham and looked upon as the backside of England in rugby league terms".

He pushed for the London job and was pleasantly surprised on his arrival. "The professional administration here is way ahead of many Sydney clubs, which have been propped up by poker-machine money, especially in marketing and development," he said.

"Australia is only ahead of England because of its junior development. London fights to get every kid playing. It's slowly succeeding. My vision is for a strong junior base in which we can eventually hand-pick London kids to play for London," he said.

Victory in the home cup-tie against Whitehaven on Sunday would leave the Broncos and Richard Branson, their chairman, one step from Wembley. "To strut my stuff there," Stains said, "would be something special." Worth the 2am starts, certainly.



Stains has the contentment of a man in control of affairs. Photograph: Andre Camara

SNOOKER

Hendry's good practice pays off

FROM PHIL YATES IN SHANGHAI

STEPHEN HENDRY and Billy Snaddon, who for the past eight years have practised together regularly at Spencers Snooker Centre, Stirling, will meet 6,500 miles away in the semi-finals of the China International here tomorrow.

Hendry, who edged Steve Davis 5-4 on the black in the last 16, improved his play during a 5-2 victory over John Parrott, while Snaddon achieved a personal best in a world-ranking event by unexpectedly beating Stephen Lee 5-3.

"That's probably my best performance of the season," Hendry, who won the Scottish Open last month, said. "I can't remember missing an important ball from distance."

Parrott failed to score in four frames as Hendry displayed ominous sharpness. The fourth, which gave the Scot a 3-1 lead at the mid-session interval, was of particular significance. Parrott built a 51-0 advantage before Hendry potted a long red to initiate a clearance of 87.

"When you scrape through a match you should have lost, like I did against Steve, it tends to relax you and that's how I felt out there," Hendry, who compiled a break of 107 in the sixth frame, said.

Snaddon's break-building was more modest but the result was paramount for the world No 32, who is now guaranteed £11,000, the biggest cheque of a professional career that began in 1991. The possibility of Scottish players monopolising the semi-final places remains after a 5-4 win for Alan McManus over Mark King in the second round. He plays Ken Doherty today, while in the remaining quarter-final John Higgins meets Paul Davies, the world No 41.

Davies, from Cardiff, recovered from 2-0 and 58-0 adrift in the third frame to defeat Mark Williams, winner of the Thailand Masters in Bangkok on Sunday, 5-2.

Whitakers appear secure

BY JENNY MACARTHUR

JOHN WHITAKER, who has qualified for every World Cup showjumping final since the event started in 1979, hopes to secure his place for this year when he competes in the Paris qualifier this weekend. His younger brother, Michael, and Geoff Billington make up the British representation at the show which begins today and, on Sunday, will stage the ninth of the 12 World Cup qualifying competitions.

The three British riders are already in the top 12 of the Western European League, from which the first 19 are eligible for the final in Gothenburg next month. Whitaker, who in the past has often qualified at the last minute, is pleasantly surprised to find himself as high as ninth at this comparatively early stage. "I just need a few more points this weekend to make certain," he said yesterday.

With Virtual Village Welham now resting, Whitaker will rely on Heyman on Sunday. "He hasn't done a grand prix this year but he's been to a couple of shows and is jumping well," Whitaker said of the ten-year-old gelding. If he does qualify, he will use Heyman in the final and possibly Grannusch, the 19-year-old on which he won the first two legs of the final last year, followed by the Olympia qualifier in December.

Billington will rides his best horse, Virtual Village It's Otto, on which he was third in Paris last year. Having been as low as joint 34th a month ago, he has climbed to eleventh by virtue of good performances in Bordeaux and Bologna last month.

Michael Whitaker, who is lying third, with 43 points, is virtually assured of his place in Gothenburg. His consistent performances this season include third place at both Millstreet and Olympia. "I'm pleased to have the pressure of qualifying lifted, but I'd like to win one," he said. On Sunday, he will ride either Virtual Village Ashley or Hilton, who improves with each outing.

FOOTBALL

Gregory attracts Stone to Villa Park for £5.5m

BY CHRIS MOORE AND STEPHEN WOOD

JOHN GREGORY, the Aston Villa manager, took the turnover of his wheeling and dealing this season through the £50 million barrier last night when he bought Steve Stone from Nottingham Forest for £5.5 million.

The former England winger, 27, agreed a 4½-year contract with the option of a further year and he is likely to make his debut in Villa's FA Carling Premiership game away to Tottenham Hotspur on Saturday.

Stone is the fifth big signing made by Gregory this season, after Paul Merson, who cost £6.75 million when he moved to the Midlands from Middlesbrough, Dion Dublin, a £5.75 million buy from Coventry City, Alan Thompson, a £4.5 million purchase from Bolton Wanderers, and Steve Watson, who cost £4 million from Newcastle United. The departure of Dwight Yorke to Manchester United for £12.6 million leaves Gregory only £7 million in deficit on his transfer dealings.

He had tried to sign Stone last week, after agreeing an exchange deal with Ron Atkinson, the Forest manager, that would have seen Stan Collymore return to the City Ground, but the troubled former Forest and Liverpool striker rejected the move.

"I thought then we might have had to wait until the end of the season to have any chance of signing Stone," Gregory said, "but things have come together very quickly in the last 24 hours.

"I've actually been tracking Steve since much earlier in the season. He's an excellent all-round footballer who will give us some width on the right, but he can also play anywhere across the midfield."

After setting the pace at the top of the Premiership for the first half of the season, Villa have struggled since January, collecting only one point from their past six games. Forest are bottom of the Premiership.

Stone, who won nine England caps before suffering a career-threatening knee injury, said: "It's a massive move for me and the chance to rekindle my career with one of the top clubs in the country. It's a wrench to leave Forest after so long, but I've always given them my all."



Stone: career move

Gregory did not rule out making another signing before the transfer deadline, but insisted it would be "no one from Coventry". This was a reference to accusations made by Coventry City yesterday that Villa had made an illegal approach for George Boateng, their Dutch midfield player. Coventry have reported Villa to the Football Association and the FA Premier League.

Robbie Fowler, the Liverpool striker, sent a letter to Graeme Le Saux, the Chelsea player, yesterday in an attempt to draw a line under their public dispute. The pair were involved in a feud during the Premiership match at Stamford Bridge last month. Le Saux was seen to elbow Fowler in the back of the head, but it is believed that he was provoked by taunts from Fowler questioning his sexuality.

Fowler received an apology from Le Saux last week and issued a statement in response. That did not appear to amount to a full apology, but, after advice from Gérard Houllier, the Liverpool manager, and the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA), Fowler has written to Le Saux.

Part of the letter reads: "I am sorry if you misinterpreted my actions, which were not meant to cause any offence to yourself or anyone else." After legal advice, Fowler has, nevertheless, been careful not to admit any wrongdoing.

The Football Association is to hold an inquiry into the incident and Fowler's apology makes it possible for the controversy to be dealt with before the England squad convenes for the European championship qualifier against Poland later this month. Both Fowler and Le Saux are expected to be included in the squad, which is due to be announced by Kevin Keegan, the temporary manager, next Thursday.

FOOTBALL IN BRIEF

■ Derby County expect to sign Vassillis Borbokis from Sheffield United today. Derby's proposed move for the Greek wing back, with Jonathan Hunt, Robbie Kozluk and about £500,000 going to Bramall Lane, has dragged on since Tuesday. But talks were continuing yesterday and the East Midlands club are hopeful that the 30-year-old will soon be a Derby player.
He must sign by noon today to be eligible for the FA Carling Premiership match with Liverpool at Pride Park tomorrow.

■ Harry Redknapp, the West Ham United manager, has closed the book on his dressing-room clash with John Moncur and is concentrating on the match away to Chelsea tomorrow. Moncur was fined after the row and Redknapp said: "This is an internal matter and as far as I am concerned it is in the past."

■ Huddersfield have signed the Brentford goalkeeper, Kevin Dearden, on a free transfer as cover for Nico Vaesen. Dearden, 29, will be on the bench for the game away to Ipswich Town.



Knowles is a study in concentration as he battles it out with Sidek in Birmingham yesterday. Photograph: Mike Scott

Knowles profits from Sidek injury

BY RICHARD EATON

PETER KNOWLES, who came close to giving up badminton after a two-month suspension earlier in the season, scored one of the best wins of his career in ensuring that two Englishmen reached the third round of the Yonex All-England championships for the first time in eight years yesterday. Later, however, both were beaten in the fourth round by seeded players.

Knowles went through when Rashid Sidek, the joint fifth seed and a former runner-up, retired with a calf-muscle tear at one game all, enabling the former England national champion to join Colin Haughton in the last 16 at the National Indoor Arena in Birmingham. These two were caught playing cricket with hotel cleaning equipment at the Dutch Open last October and Knowles was punished for later abusing officials.

Haughton received only a one-month ban without losing funding but Knowles, who, coincidentally, had just beaten Sidek, lost about £2,000 of income. It made him wonder if it was all worthwhile.

"I only came back because I love the game and now I'm glad I did," Knowles, who took a part-time salesman's job during December and January, said. His form suffered when he returned to competition, but he was resolute and confident yesterday, knowing that his best All-England result was a possibility.

He needed a chunk of luck, though. Sidek came with a well-timed push from 11-9 down in the first game to win it 15-12 and advanced to a four-point lead in the second. "It was at 13-8 that I felt something go," the Malaysian said.

Knowles hurried the pace and took the second game 15-13. Then, during the five-minute interval before the deciding game, Sidek, 30, could hardly walk and was forced to default.

Haughton was always in charge against Martin Delfs, 19, the son of Flemming Delfs, the former world and All-England champion, winning 15-4, 15-6. Haughton eventually went out 15-12, 15-2, to Fung Permadi, the second-seeded Indonesian, while Knowles, who seemed to be bothered by a groin problem, lost 15-3, 15-10, to Tawfik Hidayat.

There was further disappointment for the British contingent when Kelly Morgan, the Commonwealth champion from Wales, went out in the second round, beaten by Ellen Angelina, a promising youngster from the Indonesian assembly line, in straight games.

SPORT IN BRIEF

London in favour for world event

■ TRIATHLON: The prospect of the world championships being staged in London in September gathered momentum yesterday when the British Triathlon Association (BTA) said that it had agreed to progress a bid (David Powell writes). The International Triathlon Union (ITU) is looking for an emergency replacement venue for Munich after the world governing body fell out with the German federation last month. Mike Gilmore, the ITU managing director, said that, despite interest shown from Cancun (Mexico) and Montreal, he had a "clear preference" for London. "Having considered the risks, we decided it was a great opportunity and that we wanted to bid," Elaine Shaw, the BTA chief executive, said.

■ CYCLING: Michael Boogerd, the Dutch national champion, claimed the overall lead in the Paris-Nice stage race yesterday after an audacious attack took him and Santiago Botero, of Colombia, clear of the main field in the steep hills of the Puy de Dome region. Botero outsprinted Boogerd to snatch the stage victory, but the Dutch rider's unexpected move caught his main title rivals unawares.

■ ROWING: More than 600 crews will be involved on the Tideway today and tomorrow with the staging of the schools' and women's head of the river races. St Edward's, stroked by Chris Smith, a 1998 junior international, and winners for the past two years, lead off 358 school crews in the Schools Head from the Bandstand to Putney today. The three leading starting crews in the Mortlake to Putney Women's Head tomorrow, Marlow, Thames and Kingston, are packed with senior internationals, although Kingston may be depleted because of injuries.

■ ATHLETICS: Paul Tergat, of Kenya, a four-time world cross-country champion, will run in the the Compaq Road Races at Balmoral on Saturday, April 24. Tergat will take part in the five-mile race.

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

BY ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

Begin Bridge with *The Times*: Lesson 47 – More on responder's second bid

Last week I promised to cover the situation where responder has sufficient values to make a second bid, maybe even to insist on game, but even after the first three bids of the auction the best trump suit is unclear. Look at the following hands after the auction 1♡-1♠-2♡:

(A)		(B)		(C)	
♠	KQJ105	♠	AK7643	♠	AQ9653
♡	54	♡	5	♡	7
♢	AK65	♢	K762	♢	AKJ65
♣	J6	♣	65	♣	3

On *Hand (A)* I suppose you could jump straight to Four Hearts, since we worked out last week that partner must have a six-card suit: but it seems a little premature with only a small doubleton in his suit. Either Four Spades or Three No-Trumps could be a better contract. There is no need for you to decide now. Bid Three Diamonds. A new suit bid by responder is always forcing (to game if that suit is bid at the three level). This gives partner the chance to bid his hearts yet again with a very strong suit, give delayed support for your spades which he would do with, say, Ax. Alternatively he could bid Three No-Trumps if he had clubs well stopped.

Last week I gave an example of a weaker hand than *Hand (B)* that had a six-card spade suit and a singleton heart. I said that the weaker hand should pass Two Hearts. This *Hand (B)* should bid Two Spades. This bid says, 'I know you have a six-card heart suit but I do not have a fit for you. However, I do have a six-card spade suit and a promising hand if you have a secondary fit for me.' Partner will usually pass but can bid on if his hand is suitable for playing in spades. Note that it would be wrong to bid Three Diamonds because the hand is not strong enough to force to game.

Hand (C) has enormous potential, but not in hearts. Again you bid Three Diamonds but this time you are not interested in playing in hearts or no-trumps. You are hoping to hear spade support from partner. If he rebids Three Hearts or Three No-Trumps you will bid your diamonds a second time.

All the hands I have looked at so far have been after the sequence 1♡-1♠-2♡ but the principles are similar whatever the auction. After a sequence such as 1♡-1♠-2♠, responder's choices are to pass, invite game with Three Spades or go all the way to game himself. After, say, 1♡-1♠-2♣, with a minimum hand responder can pass with, say, 6-8 HCP and much better clubs than hearts or give preference to Two Hearts with the same sort of values; with invitational values responder usually chooses between Two No-Trumps, Three Clubs and Three Hearts; and with 13 HCP or more, responder bids game in what he thinks will be the best trump suit (or no-trumps).

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

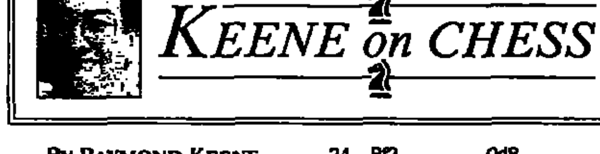
HEADAGE
a. A person's intellectual age
b. Number of animals
c. A medicinal herb

MOUTAN
a. The Himalayan sheep
b. A tribal chieftain
c. A pink shrub

LAULAU
a. A grass miniskirt
b. Meat and fish
c. A triumphal dance

INTERFERON
a. A protein
b. A computer virus
c. A tactic at American football

Answers on page 50



KEENE on CHESS

BY RAYMOND KEENE
CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Linares final

Today I give the full final crosstable of results from the vitally significant tournament at Linares. Kasparov has won by a dominating and extraordinary margin of 2.5 points over his closest rivals. The question of who should challenge Kasparov for the world title is still open, since his two main rivals, Viswanathan Anand and Vladimir Kramnik, shared second prize.

White: Viswanathan Anand
Black: Michael Adams
Linares 1999
English Opening

1	Nf3	Nf6
2	c4	e6
3	Nc3	Bb4
4	Qb3	c5
5	g3	Nc6
6	a3	Ba5
7	Bg2	0-0
8	0-0	d6
9	e3	e5
10	d3	Rb8
11	Nd2	Bf5
12	Nd5	Nxd5
13	cxd5	Ne7
14	Nc4	b5
15	Nxa5	Qxa5
16	e4	Bd7
17	Qd1	f5
18	b4	cxb4
19	Bg5	Nc8
20	Qd2	f4
21	gxf4	h6
22	Bh4	exf4
23	f3	Qb6+
24	Bf2	Qd8
25	axb4	Qg5
26	Kh1	Qh5
27	Rg1	Rb7
28	Bd4	Rf7
29	Qf2	Kh7
30	Rgc1	Ne7
31	Ra6	Ng6
32	Rxd6	Nh4
33	Bb2	Rb6
34	Rxd7	Rxd7
35	Bh3	Rf7
36	Bg4	Qg5
37	Be6	Rfb7
38	Rg1	Qd8
39	Qf1	Ra6
40	Qh3	Ra2
41	Be5	Rd2
42	d4	Rd3
43	Bf5+	Kg8
44	Bc8	Nxf3
45	Qe6+	Black resigns

Diagram of final position

Keene online

You can send me your queries, puzzles, problems and games direct by email. The address is keenechess@aol.com. The best contributions from Times readers will be published either here or in the Saturday Times Weekend column.

Linares, Final Crosstable

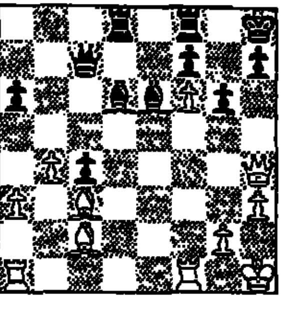
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
1 Kasparov	**	½½	½1	½½	1½	11	½1	11	10½
2 Kramnik	½½	**	½½	½½	½½	½½	½1	1½	8
3 Anand	½0	½½	**	½½	½1	½½	1½	½1	8
4 Leko	½½	½½	½½	**	½½	1½	0½	0½	6½
5 Topalov	0½	½½	½0	½½	**	½0	½1	½½	6
6 Ivanchuk	00	½½	½½	0½	½1	**	1½	0½	6
7 Svidler	½0	½0	0½	1½	½0	0½	**	½1	5½
8 Adams	00	0½	½0	1½	½½	1½	½0	**	5½

In the above table, 1 represents a win, ½ a draw, and 0 a loss

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

White to play. This position is from the game Caurin-Kovacevic, Valencia 1998. In this position, White translated his kingside pressure into a beautiful attacking finish. Can you spot the conclusion?



Solution on page 50

Merthyr bank on arrival of Money

NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL
BY WALTER GAMMIE

THE future of Merthyr Tydfil should be guaranteed today when contracts are signed for Just Players Ltd, a consortium headed by Owen Money, a leading Welsh media personality, to take the club out of administration. Followers of the Dr Martens League club will be hoping that the move puts an end to months of strife that have verged on farce as the job of manager twice rested in the hands of John Lewis and twice in those of Eddie May as competing groups vied for the club.

The final twist came on Monday when the deal was delayed after Eugene Caparros, who had owned the now-defunct Ebbw Vale in the League of Wales, insisted that Just Players should not be able to take over because he had put in a higher offer. A meeting of the creditors decided to support the Just Players bid.

One of the first tasks of Owen Edwards — the son of Gareth Edwards, the former Wales and British Lions scrum half, who will be installed as chief executive — is to decide upon a new manager. The consortium's original choice, Colin Addison, who took Merthyr to second place in the Dr Martens premier division after an exciting duel with Forest Green Rovers last season, is now in charge of Scarborough, the Nationwide League club. Carl Dale, the former Cardiff City striker, had been mentioned as a candidate, but on Wednesday he signed as a player for Newport AFC, having been released by Yeovil Town.

It is expected that the new man will be installed for the FAW Premier Cup quarter-final against Barry Town on Tuesday — a fixture by which Merthyr set great store as losing semi-finalists are guaranteed £20,000. Gareth Abraham, the caretaker player-manager and groundsman, and Mark Williams are likely to take the side to Dorchester Town tomorrow.

CRICKET

Lara must attempt to sway unfriendly jury

FROM PAT GIBSON
IN KINGSTON, JAMAICA

THERE will be no hiding place for Brian Lara in the second Test against Australia starting here tomorrow. By the end of it, the selectors, who have put him on a two-match probation, will have to make up their minds whether he is the man to lead them out of the gravest crisis in West Indies cricket history.

It was one thing for Lara to captain the side at the Queen's Park Oval, where his fellow Trinidadians had no difficulty excusing him for the collapse to 51 all out and defeat by 312 runs in the first Test. It will be quite another matter in Jamaica, where there is more hostility towards him than anywhere else in the Caribbean.

The last time West Indies played a Test match here, 14 months ago, it was abandoned after 66 minutes because the pitch was too dangerous. England were 17 for three and play had been stopped six times for injured batsmen to receive treatment.

There is no chance of a repetition of that debacle. Charlie Joseph, the Sabina Park groundsman, reckons that the relaid pitch provides the most even surface that he can remember here.

Significantly, Joseph, who has been working on the ground for almost 40 years, was on leave in New York when the square was first relaid in an attempt to produce more life, with such catastrophic consequences. "When I came back, I had never seen anything like it in my life," he said. "It was awful, man. I couldn't believe they could prepare a pitch like it.. That night on the radio it was my name they keep saying ... they saying man work here all those years and can't prepare a pitch."

Jamaica have played three Busta Cup matches on the new surface and there have been numerous trial games. Joseph said: "It play good man, even bounce for the fast bowlers, turn for the spinners. It will last five days, even six, if the batsmen are any good."

Which brings us back to Lara. With Chanderpaul again ruled out with a recurrence of his shoulder injury and Hooper still unavailable, he is the only proven Test batsman in the West Indies side and he admits that it is up to him to provide the runs.

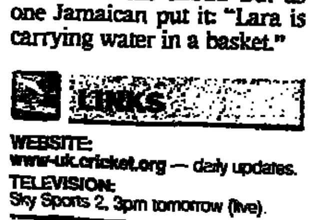


Lara: captaincy on trial

Lara, who has not added to his ten Test hundreds since the game against Sri Lanka in St Vincent in June 1997, said: "I think it's important for myself and for West Indies cricket that I try to solve my batting problems and see how best I can go out to get similar scores like I used to four years ago."

He is going to be under enormous pressure for feelings are running high locally. Jamaicans have not forgotten how he agitated for the captaincy when their own Courtney Walsh had the job and they know that another Jamaican, Jimmy Adams, is one of the selectors' few alternatives.

Walsh was yesterday given the keys to the city of Kingston in recognition of his achievement in taking 400 Test wickets. Nehemiah Perry, the Jamaica off spinner, who has taken more wickets than anyone on the new-look square, is in line for his debut. But as one Jamaican put it: "Lara is carrying water in a basket."



WEBSITE: www-uk.cricket.org — daily updates.
TELEVISION: Sky Sports 2, 3pm tomorrow (live).

New Zealand pay for loose shots

SOUTH AFRICA were in command of the second Test match at stumps on the first day in Christchurch. They reduced New Zealand to 168 all out and then scored 54 without loss, Gary Kirsten and Herschelle Gibbs easily holding out New Zealand's new-ball attack. Kirsten, who hit a century in the drawn first Test, was timing the ball well, driving and cutting six boundaries in 90 minutes.

Dion Nash, the New Zealand captain, surprisingly batted first on a wicket expected to assist the early bowlers. But it was loose shots that undid most of the New Zealand batsmen. Two wickets fell in the first half-hour and, apart from a brief period of wayward bowling before lunch, New Zealand never recovered. Matthew Horne looked in touch, but went to Jacques Kallis's second ball for 36, flashing outside the off stump to be caught at second slip.

Three wickets in as many overs by Allan Donald and Shaun Pollock shortly after lunch left the home side at 115 for six. Nathan Astle looked in control on a wicket playing flat and true, but Donald had him caught on the third-man boundary, slashing at a wide delivery. Donald left the field, having aggravated a stomach muscle injury, while Simon Doull, the New Zealand strike bowler, twisted an ankle.

Aravinda de Silva, returning to captain his country after injury, and Chaminda Vaas, the pace bowler, reinforced Sri Lanka ahead of the start today of the Asian Test Championship final against Pakistan in Dhaka. Temperatures have reached 37C, with high humidity.

هكذا من الأهل

THE TIMES FRIDA

Chris

Pitm

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Three of the young trainer's 30 horses have been prepared for the Weatherbys Champion Bumper, a prize only Dato Star has ever denied the Irish. Whether as mother or tutor, his gratitude for Jenny Pitman's counsel will always endure, but success on Wednesday would amount to a declaration of his independence.

After all, heredity will have given him nothing if not self-belief.

With 22 winners, the former jockey has enjoyed a fine second season since flying the nest. But Pitman, 32, is reconciled to the disappointments of his new craft and the only unbeaten member of his Festival trio, John David, has met with a setback and is a doubtful starter.

John David's striking debut at Chepstow in November prompted various fruitless offers to his owner — inflated as high as £200,000 by the achievements of his half-brother, Teeton Mill. Pitman, of course, needs no instruction in the importance of family trees. "You can be taught a skill," he said. "But if it's not a natural thing you can only ever achieve a certain level. To be the best, whether you are a footballer, or ... you need that extra ... that gut reaction ... that sets you apart."

If an instinct ... comes with the Pitman ...

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Wincanton

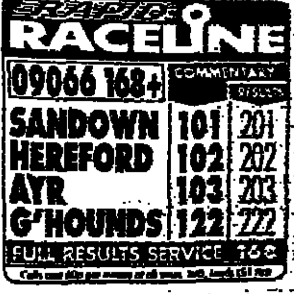
2.20 1. Tequila
2.50 1. Laredo
3.20 1. Nalysan. Timekeeper's top rating
3.50 1. King's Cross
4.20 1. Skipmore
4.50 1. Night Thyme
5.20 1. Basman
Jackpot: £2,454.60
Placepot: £8.20.

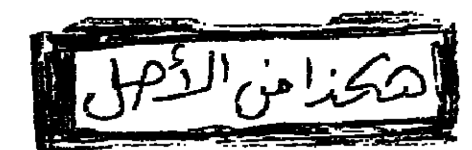
Carlisle

Going: soft, heavy in places
2.00 1. Sir Bob
2.30 1. June's River
3.00 1. Sail On Sid
3.30 1. Sad Mad Bad
4.00 1. Allerbeck
4.30 1. The Next Waltz. Thunderer's nap
5.00 1. Denanus
Placepot: £8.30. Quadpot: £2.30.

Towcester

Going: soft, heavy patches
2.10 1. Wellswood
2.40 1. Ever Blessed
3.10 1. Bora Bora
3.40 1. Get The Point
4.10 1. Scotby
4.40 1. Avostar
5.10 1. Golden Rose
Placepot: £16.20. Quadpot: £7.80.





Chris McGrath meets a young trainer with success in the genes

Pitman begins to make his mark

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If an instinct for horses comes with the Pitman chromosomes, he also acquired a practical insight into training both riding for his mother — they shared a Gold Cup with Garrison Savannah — and then as her assistant for four years. "We don't do things very differently," he said. "We use the same gallops, the same feed.

"I spend a lot of time getting to know the horses' habits. To me, the mental side of training is every bit as important as the physical. You train the mind as well as the body."

When Pitman quit the saddle, people assumed that he was being groomed for the succession at his mother's Lambourn yard. She has never been the retiring type, however, and he set up his own operation down the road. He rents Saxon House stables from Fulke Walwyn's widow, Cath. These same boxes once accommodated Mill House, The Dikler, Charlie Potheen and Mandarin.

Both trainers' legacies are entwined in Pitman's love of the "old-fashioned" chaser — to which raw, substantial model all three bumper horses conform. That is why he is so heartened by what they have already achieved, win, lose or draw at the Festival. "It's all a bonus," he said. "We didn't buy them to be good bumper horses but as Gold Cup horses. They've got the size and scope for a champion over fences to be among them."

Canasta won at Huntingdon before finishing second at Ascot last month, while Monsignor, likewise, made a successful debut, at Sandown, before being placed at Warwick and Newbury. "He cruised to the front at Warwick," Pitman said. "But the ground was desperate and he just didn't get home. He's working well and would have a live each-way chance if the ground isn't too soft. They crawled when Canasta was beaten and I hope he'll run a big race, too."

The Gold Cup provided the outstanding moment of Pitman's riding career and, in common with most professionals, he treasures the Cheltenham championships above even Aintree. Nor is there any mistaking his confidence. "I feel I can be one of the best. My strike-rate first time out is one in three. I don't think anyone else is higher. I'm proud of that. I don't have any other interests. I don't play golf, don't go to the pub. I devote my life to the horses. My wife would say I'm obsessed, and I probably don't see as much of my family as I should.

"Unfortunately I'm very ambitious and it's important to make an impression." Evidently it is better to make your own than to be merely someone else's Mark.

Diary, page 25

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: NATIVE KING (2.35 Sandown Park)

The Jim Old-trained runner looks capable of further improvement now that he tackles a stiffer test of stamina.

Next best: Knight's Crest (2.00 Sandown Park)

ANDREW HASSON



Pitman hopes to saddle his first Cheltenham Festival winner next Wednesday

Teeton Mill team left in dark by Williamson

By Chris McGrath

THE tug of war over Norman Williamson's ride in the Tote Cheltenham Gold Cup is threatening to absorb more ink and intrigue than the likely outcome of the race itself. Yesterday, the owners of Teeton Mill responded to suggestions that Williamson would honour a commitment to the Irish novice, Nick Dundee, by reiterating their confidence that Williamson would stay with the top-rated British chaser. But the conspicuous absence of any such assurance from the jockey himself prompted an admission of their growing irritation.

Williamson still protests that he may yet be spared a decision by Nick Dundee going for the Royal & SunAlliance Chase on Wednesday instead. Yet while that horse's connections refuse to commit themselves in public, antepost betting on both races offers corroboration to an Irish grapevine that is adamant: given cut underfoot, Nick Dundee's owner, John Magnier, will favour a tilt at the Gold Cup.

Of course, even if a final decision were still to be made, Williamson could assure The Winning Line, Teeton Mill's owners, that he will partner the grey regardless of Nick Dundee's Festival target. His failure to do so is understood to reflect some formal engagement with Magnier.

Venetia Williams, trainer of Teeton Mill, could shed no light on the matter after a long conversation with the jockey at Towcester yesterday. "I can't tell anybody anything," she said, "as I don't know more than anyone else at present."

Stephen Winstanley, spokesman for The Winning Line, insisted that Williamson would ride Teeton Mill, but conceded alternative arrangements have been made. These are thought to involve Tony McCoy, whose Gold Cup mount, Unsinkable Boxer, is himself expected to switch to the SunAlliance once Nick Dundee is formally scratched.

"Venetia has assured us that Norman will ride," Winstanley said. "We'll be disappointed if he doesn't and, frankly, amazed. I'm not happy with the situation as it stands. We've made contingency plans and won't be left without a top jockey. I understand Norman's point of view but we can't wait forever, as we've a syndicate of owners who want to know where they stand."

Williamson said: "There is no point me saying what I ride until a decision on Nick Dundee has been made. If he runs in the SunAlliance there's no decision for me to make, so what's the hype about?" But he did not sound remotely comfortable.

☐ Coral has opened a book on the Dubai World Cup, making Silver Charm 7-4 favourite to repeat last year's success on March 28. The firm then bets: 5-2 High-Rise, 3-1 Victory Gallop, 6-1 Daylami.

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Wincanton

Going: good to soft, good in places

2.20 (2m hdle) 1, Taquila (M A Fitzgerald, 4-6 fav); 2, My Man Dan (40-1); 3, Guido (16-1). [illegible]

[illegible]

Carlisle

Going: soft, heavy in places

[illegible]

Towcester

Going: soft, heavy patches

[illegible]

SANDOWN PARK

THUNDERER

2.00 Country Store
2.35 Russell Road
3.10 COURT MELODY (nap)
3.45 Another Night
4.15 Silver Stick
4.50 Chevalier Errant

Timekeeper's top rating: 4.50 ESTATE AGENT.

Carl Evans: 4.15 Extra Stout.

GOING: GOOD (GOOD TO SOFT IN PLACES) TOTE JACKPOT MEETING SIS

2.00 WORCESTER PARK NOVICES HANDICAP CHASE (£4,299: 3m 110yd) (10 runners)

[illegible]

2.35 RACAL NOVICES HURDLE (£4,416: 2m 6f) (11 runners)

[illegible]

3.10 HORSE & HOUND GRAND MILITARY GOLD CUP (AMATEUR CHASE) (£5,084: 3m 110yd) (14 runners)

[illegible]

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS	Wins	Rnrs	%	JOCKEYS	Wins	Rnrs	%
J Old	19	55	34.5	O Ellwood	6	17	35.3
P Nicholls	12	39	30.8	R Dunwoody	31	129	24.0
Mrs A Perrett	3	15	20.0	J Osborne	16	82	19.5
P Hobbs	9	47	19.1	A Maguire	12	77	15.6
D Nicholson	17	91	18.7	C Llewellyn	10	65	15.4
J King	7	44	15.9	M Fitzgerald	17	118	14.4
N Henderson	15	101	14.9	R Johnson	7	50	14.0

GUIDE TO OUR RACECARD

[illegible]

3.45 TOTE HANDICAP HURDLE (SHOWCASE RACE AND TOTE TRIFECTA RACE) (£5,485: 2m 6f) (10 runners)

[illegible]

4.15 DUKE OF GLOUCESTER MEMORIAL HUNTERS CHASE (PAST & PRESENT) (£2,042: 3m 110yd) (5 runners)

[illegible]

4.50 BUSHY PARK NH NOVICES HURDLE (£2,905: 2m 110yd) (14 runners)

[illegible]

ESTATE AGENT was not winning out of turn lates and should again have a major say here

Blinkered first time

Hereford: 3.00 Asinbox, Trakelor. 5.10 Another Chancer.

AYR

THUNDERER

2.10 Bodega Bay. 2.45 Clady Boy. 3.20 Vilprano. 3.55 Weaver George. 4.25 Strathmore Lodge. 5.00 Western General.

Carl Evans: 4.25 Spartan Breeze.

GOING: GOOD TO SOFT SIS

2.10 LOCH DOON NH MAIDEN HURDLE (£2,145: 2m) (11 runners)

[illegible]

2.45 ROYAL HIGHLAND FUSILIERS NOVICES CHASE (£2,898: 2m 4f) (11 runners)

[illegible]

3.20 JAMES BARCLAY MEMORIAL HANDICAP HURDLE (£2,815: 2m 6f) (7 runners)

[illegible]

3.55 ARTHUR CHALLENGE CUP (HANDICAP CHASE) (£3,737: 2m 4f) (5 runners)

1 3F61 WEAVER GEORGE 11 (D,F,G,S) W Storey 9-12-1 (5ex) R McGrath
2 -F31 HARFDECENT 16 (F,G,S) Mrs M Reveley 8-11-9 P Niven 105
3 1F03 FEN TERRIER 11 (D,G,S) F Murtagh 7-11-8 C McCormack (3) 88
4 -4UP RACHAEL'S OWEN 11 (BF,CD,F,G,S) J Goldie 9-10-11 A Dobbin 105
5 52-P NUWAY 11 (F,G,S) M Barnes 9-10-11 S Taylor -

[illegible]

4.25 AYRSHIRE AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION CUP (HUNTERS CHASE) (£1,494: 2m 5f 110yd) (10 runners)

[illegible]

5.00 CAPABILITY SCOTLAND & SCOPE NOVICES HANDICAP HURDLE (£2,882: 2m) (7 runners)

[illegible]

COURSE SPECIALISTS

[illegible]

HEREFORD

THUNDERER

1.50 Be My Judge. 2.25 Distant Echo. 3.00 Asinbox. 3.30 Shadiann. 4.05 Gratomi. 4.40 Archer. 5.10 Pennyahei.

Carl Evans: 4.40 Mr Dow Jones.

GOING: GOOD TO SOFT SIS

1.50 BONUSFILM NOVICES HURDLE (£2,892: 2m 3f 110yd) (16 runners)

[illegible]

2.25 TRIPLEPRINT NOVICES CHASE (£3,160: 2m) (5 runners)

[illegible]

3.00 BONUSPHOTO NOVICES SELLING HURDLE (£1,870: 2m 1f) (13 runners)

[illegible]

COURSE SPECIALISTS

[illegible]

3.30 BONUSPRINT HANDICAP HURDLE (£3,518: 2m 3f 110yd) (8 runners)

[illegible]

4.05 DOUBLEPRINT HANDICAP CHASE (£4,275: 2m) (9 runners)

[illegible]

4.40 BONUSPRINT HUNTERS CHASE (£1,532: 3m 1f 110yd) (10 runners)

[illegible]

5.10 DOUBLEPRINT NOVICES HANDICAP HURDLE (£2,472: 3m 2f) (13 runners)

[illegible]

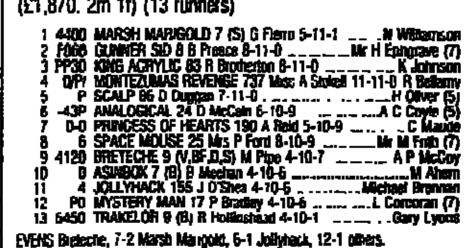
Dato Star and Lord Gyllene back on the sidelines

ISTABRAQ will face a maximum of 16 rivals in the Smurfit Champion Hurdle at Cheltenham on Tuesday. Last year's record-equalling 12-length winner was among 17 horses declared for the race yesterday.

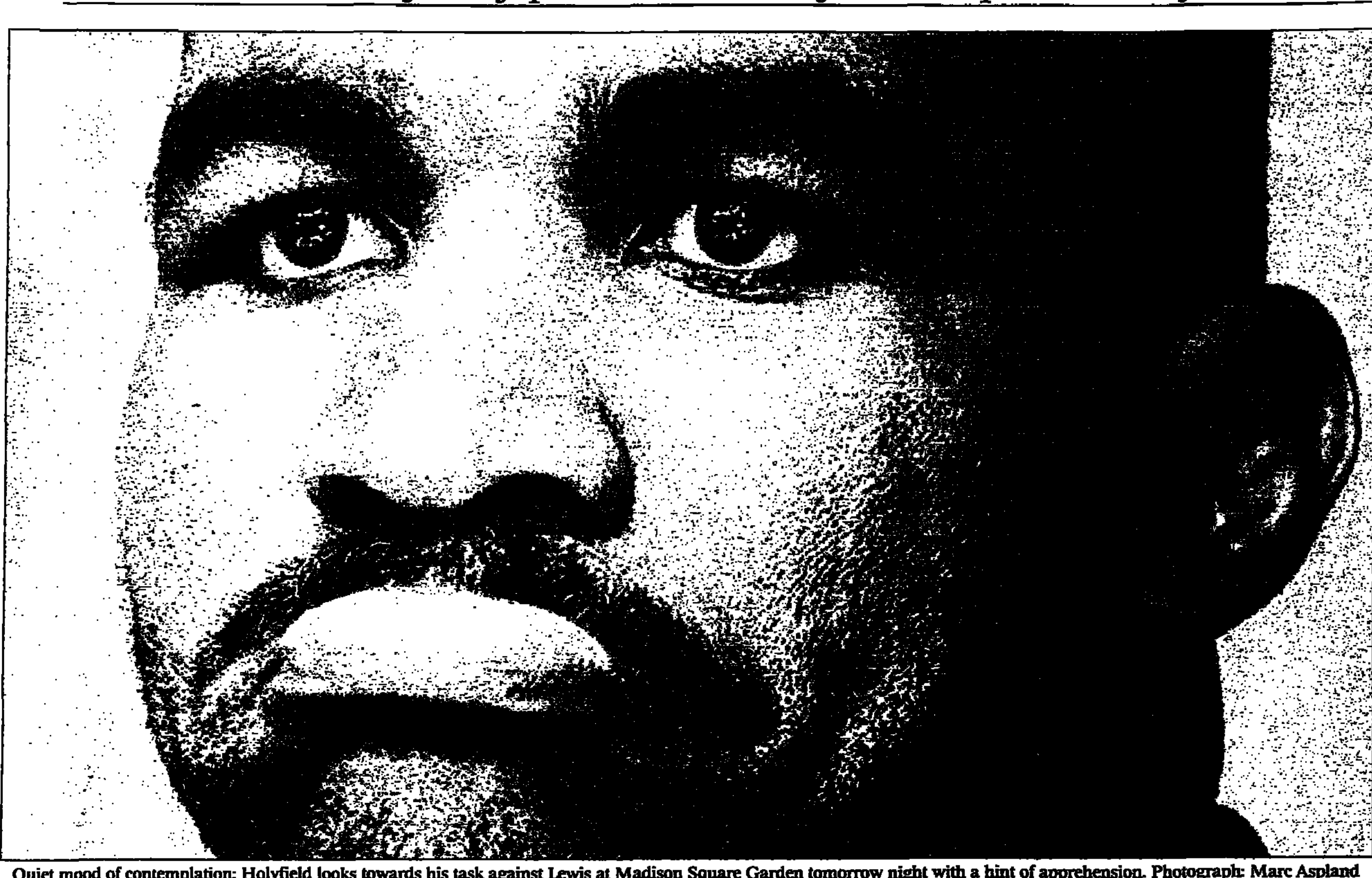
His stable-companion Theatreworld, runner-up for the past two years, and Bellator are the only other acceptors to have run in the race 12 months ago. Dato Star, blighted by injury throughout his career, was among the horses withdrawn yesterday after disappointing Malcolm Jefferson, his trainer, in his recent homework. "He just isn't right," Jefferson said. "We went to school him this morning and he is not schooling as he should, so he will not be running."

Another horse back on the sidelines is Lord Gyllene, the 1997 Grand National winner, who was yesterday ruled out of next month's renewal. The 11-year-old has suffered a suspected stress fracture of the pelvis and will miss the rest of the season. His injury came to light in tests carried out to investigate a muscle strain.

Lord Gyllene did not attempt a repeat National win last year because of leg trouble. He has been soundly beaten in his two races this campaign.



Steward feels heavy-duty punishment may catch up with Holyfield as the big fight approaches



Quiet mood of contemplation: Holyfield looks towards his task against Lewis at Madison Square Garden tomorrow night with a hint of apprehension. Photograph: Marc Aspland

Time for Lewis to come of age

FROM SRIKUMAR SEN, BOXING CORRESPONDENT, IN NEW YORK

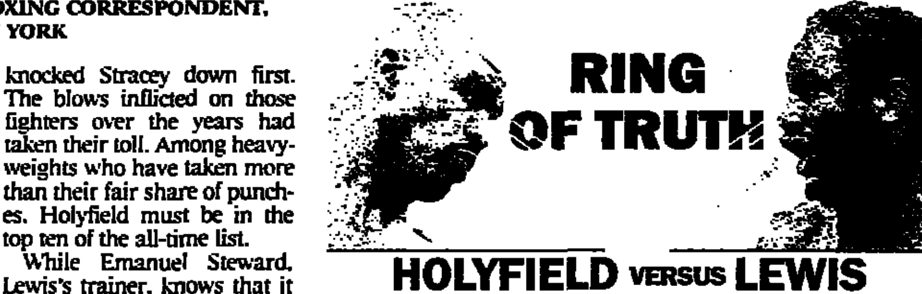
IT HAS been said by an American critic of Lennox Lewis that the only way he can lift the world heavyweight championship at Madison Square Garden is if Evander Holyfield wakes up 50 years old tomorrow, the day of the bout.

Clearly the expert does not believe that there is the slightest chance of Holyfield, who is 37 this year, waking up in the ring feeling his years. Yet it happens all the time to old fighters.

Boxers can grow old suddenly in the course of a contest, as Jack Dempsey did at the age of 32 against Gene Tunney, to be followed by others such as Bob Foster, 36, against Jorge Ahumada, Joe Brown, 36, against Carlos Ortez, Sugar Ray Leonard, 34, against Terry Norris and, nearer home, Jose Napoles, 35, against John Stracey — and that after Napoles had knocked Stracey down first. The blows inflicted on those fighters over the years had taken their toll. Among heavyweights who have taken more than their fair share of punches, Holyfield must be in the top ten of the all-time list.

While Emanuel Steward, Lewis's trainer, knows that it takes only one blow in a fight to start the ageing process in veterans like Holyfield, he is not banking on it. He is not ruling it out, either. He said: "I'm not pushing that too much for this fight, but it could happen at any time because I know that all the punches Evander has taken will have their effect one day.

"Beatings are not good for you. They might make you a warrior and give you recognition, but they take their toll, for sure.



"Muhammad Ali, good as he was as a boxer, had tough fights with Kenny Norton and Joe Frazier, even with George Foreman, and all of a sudden you see the effect of the beatings. He didn't get the recognition of being a warrior by being a do-nothing, running fighter. He kept taking a pounding and kept coming back. So all of it could come back in this fight, too."

Steward said that the resistance of old boxers to punches varied from fighter to fighter. Jake LaMotta, who took more punches than most fighters, remains unaffected to this day, but Sugar Ray Robinson, one of LaMotta's contemporaries, suffered severely from brain damage.

"Wilfred Benitez was one of the best defensive fighters I have ever seen," Steward said. "But look at him now. Everybody is affected differently.

"Look what happened to Riddick Bowe after just four hard fights: two with Golota and two with Holyfield. The funny thing is, Bowe did more damage than Holyfield.

"In his last fight with Golota, he was completely shot. Yet Evander, who took a serious beating and a bad knockout in his last fight with Bowe, looks all right at the moment. We don't quite know which fight started the process in Bowe.

"It could have been the first fight with Evander, when they had that tremendous toe-to-toe at the Thomas and Mack in Las Vegas. So, like Bowe, Evander could go at any time."

Bowe suddenly had problems keeping his weight down, lost his resistance to a punch and, in short, became what is known in the sport as a "shot fighter".

Steward believes that Lewis hits hard enough to make Holyfield feel his age during the contest. "I believe Lennox is the worst guy Holyfield should be fighting, a big, powerful kid (Lewis is 34) who is one of the hardest punchers in the business. Lennox has not had beatings. He has had tough fights which have only made him stronger."

As far as Lewis's readiness for the contest is concerned, Steward was more upbeat yesterday. He said that he had shown signs of improvement in his mental attitude to the fight since his move to New York from the Pocono Mountains, where he had been training for 11 weeks.

"The move has had a beneficial effect on Lewis," Steward said. "The break was what he needed. Even I used to go off to Detroit to see my kids in the gym and, when I came back to camp, I felt refreshed.

"I spoke to Lennox and told him that he looked stale, but now, with the fight approaching, he is really focused and very warm towards people, and remotivated."

Fighting to make sense of the heavyweight hype

FROM ROB HUGHES, CHIEF SPORTS WRITER

The black stretch limousine, its windows impenetrably dark, cruises away from Madison Square Garden. A television cameraman is in frantic pursuit on foot, risking his neck in the traffic of Seventh Avenue for a brief footage of film that can only hint that Lennox Lewis — or is it Evander Holyfield? — has just left the Garden for the last time before the Big Fight.

We are all on the outside looking in. The growing attraction of the world heavyweight unification bout tomorrow is that nobody really knows the winner in advance and, like the intrepid cameraman, we focus attention daily on one or the other of the pugilists, seldom drawing clear distinctions from them in terms of personality or in probability about which is the better. On sheer technique, it is, or was, Holyfield, but as boxing writer interviews boxing writer, the age factor and a presumed accumulation of punishment by Holyfield, sustained in boxing wars earlier in his long career, blur the vision as to the eventual outcome. We shall know tomorrow.

What I could have told the cameraman is that it was Lewis who was driven away from the Garden, because inside the theatre of Madison Square, above the sprawling and unlovely Pennsylvania station, Holyfield was fulfilling his obligation to update the Evander Holyfield website.

The restraint of both boxers is a fitting response to a sport whose dark, open secrets are incarcerated with Mike Tyson. The closest that the preambles have come to controversy have been when Holyfield was asked to explain his uncharacteristic boast that it will end in three rounds, that he will knock Lewis out.

"Why three rounds, Evander?" everyone asks.

"Because of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit," he drawls.

So the microphones move on to Lewis. "What did you mean, Lennox, when you said Holyfield is a hypocrite?"

"If somebody says something and does something different, to me that sounds like hypocrisy," Lewis responds. "It is preposterous that he is saying he will knock me out in three rounds and I was just trying to say that, if he's truly religious, why is he breaking the Commandments every second?"

Presumably a reference to Holyfield's confession that five of his nine children were born out of wedlock to different women. That ought to have riled Holyfield, but he showed the other cheek.

"I'm not a hypocrite," he replies mildly, "I'm a winner."

This is all that those in the box office in New York, working to sell the contest, have to feed on and they do it with febrile over-imagination, stating that this repartee proves the deep animosity between the rivals and between the camps.



Full flow: King, right, with Lewis

Madison Square Garden has been doing this kind of image-building business since before we were born. Furthermore, it was the original home of closed-circuit television (CCTV), which began in 1955, when the inauguration of CCTV generated $1,125,000 for the world heavyweight championship bout between Rocky Marciano and Archie Moore. By 1971, when Muhammad Ali took on Joe Frazier in the Garden, the capacity crowd of 20,455 paid a "live" take of $1.3 million and the pay-per-view television, relayed to 35 cinemas, amassed $20 million more, so that the pugilists could each take home $2.5 million. The entrepreneurs took much of the fat, presumably.

Only the numbers seem to change. When Don King the promoter, is in full, demeaning flow, trampling over many of the world's troubles to drum up his business, it has all the effect at close quarters of standing in front of a blow-dryer. King is 67 and it is a long time since he spent his years in prison — for killing a man in the street — brushing up on what he proclaims to be his vast philosophical knowledge.

Whatever he learnt there, the result is close to H L Mencken's observation that "no one ever lost money by underestimating the intelligence of the masses of the plain people". King can afford to pay Holyfield $20 million and Lewis $10 million before he and his cohorts share the greater spoils of allegedly more than 100 million pay-per-view subscribers.

Grim? There was also pantomime in the Garden theatre yesterday, with Ricky (Sid Owen) from *EastEnders*, Chris Eubank and Frank Maloney, the manager of Lewis, in the supporting cast to King. Without having to open his mouth, Maloney cut a ridiculous caricature of Englishness: mannequin in size, dwarfed by King, he was dressed from head to toe in the colours of the Union Jack and beneath his squashed flat cap, also in red, white and blue, he looked every inch a stray street-urchin out of Dickens.

The boxers may not have the personality of Ali, obviously not the intellect of Einstein, but, for however long it takes on Saturday, the sporting world on both sides of the Atlantic will be drawn to them. Even the cameraman will know which is which, particularly if one remains vertical while the other is horizontal. And then the darkness will resume.

Bobbing and weaving as the press box clever

LYNNE TRUSS



In New York

So I was schmoozing with the local press guys — one of whom is rather wittily wearing a trilby with a fake PRESS ticket tucked into the band — and one of them repeated what Evander Holyfield had just told him. "He said he's fed-up with people saying he'll fight on the inside," he confided. "He says he's going to fight Lewis on the outside, too."

Which was when it happened, you see. As the others paused to absorb this thrilling new information, I reacted — and with all the breathtaking confidence of someone who has never watched a fight, and had until a month ago only heard of Holyfield on account of someone chewing his ear. "That's nonsense," I said. "Holyfield's not big enough." At which the guys looked as surprised as if I'd just struck them with a fancy bolo punch (half-hook, half uppercut, if you're interested) while whistling "God Save the Queen".

It was bound to get technical, sooner or later. What's the point of watching this world heavyweight championship bout if you don't know (for example) that Lewis has a powerful left jab, while Holyfield is a whiz at hooking? Boxing isn't brawling, you know. And since the point of the contest on Saturday is that Holyfield and Lewis will attempt to land effective punches on each other, a vague idea of how they'll get their fists into the right place at the right time is obviously pretty important. I've just found out what a rabbit punch is, incidentally. But it has nothing to do with hopping, which is sad.

> 'I suppose this is what a phoney war feels like'

Sometimes, in the privacy of my hotel room, I make a pair of puny fists, turn the mirrors to the wall and bounce around on the balls of my feet, trying to anticipate how the bout will go. *Jab, jab, jab, toof, toof. Hook, hook, hook, toof*, oops, fell over. But it's not much use. My hooks describe the same feeble arc as a windscreen wiper and travel at roughly the same speed: my jab would shatter a poppadum (but not six) and makes my shoulder hurt. Even the balls-of-the-feet thing is tricky. And to top it all, remembering to say "toof, toof, toof" all the time is thoroughly exhausting.

Back with the guys, the intriguing thing about this contest is that nobody can predict what it will elicit from them technically. There is an idea that ace trainer Emanuel Steward has broadened Lewis's skills, but, on the other hand, nobody can argue with the fact that powerful slugging has been quite sufficient for Lennox up to now.

The fighters themselves don't really talk about the science of hitting; at their final press conference on Wednesday afternoon, they wearily reiterated their postures regarding Saturday night. Holyfield said again that he would knock out Lewis in the third; Lewis maintained, boorishly, that Holyfield was a hypocrite. Oddly, though, neither of them seemed in a desperate hurry to get the gloves on and start thrashing out these important differences.

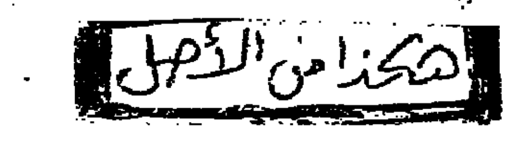
It was a ghastly occasion, that press conference. If this is the glamorous pinnacle of boxing, I can tell you for nothing I wouldn't want to be in Widnes on a wet Wednesday. Chaos reigned. Film crews with heavy, angular cameras on their shoulders swivelled without due regard for the safety of others. Boom mikes dangled and bobbed. Once the tuxedoed Don King took the stage, the chaos subsided, of course — but at a heavy price, because then he proceeded to yell at us for a full hour so loudly that I had to put my fingers in my ears.

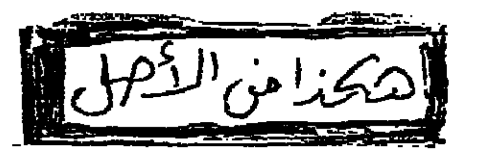
"Toof, toof," I whispered softly, to keep my spirits up. The only mildly exciting aspect to the occasion was the discovery of Ricky Butcher, from *EastEnders*, sitting in the same row. I always knew that six years as television critic would come in handy one day. I went and said hello, which seemed to alarm him, so I said goodbye as well. Meanwhile, on stage, promoters, managers and fighters each gave us a wave, while to the left (for no apparent reason) Anthony and Cleopatra stood in full Vegas rig-out — Cleopatra adding to the usual authentic Egyptian lapis lazuli headdress several duster-yellow ostrich feathers, which regrettably made her look more like a showgirl than a queen.

I suppose this is what a phoney war feels like. Last week I was dreading the fight; now I wish they'd settle it, dammit, *toof, toof*, hook, slice, fade, birdie, hang on, something wrong there — and show us what they can do.

I have heard so much about Lewis's jab that I've simply got to see it in action, even though I still deplore the whole bloody business. I also feel a faint urge to see one of these two champs buy a one-way ticket to Palookaville, and I never thought I'd say that in my life.

So the expertise is shaping up. I now know a "knockover" is not an easy heist in a post office and an "undercard" is not a novice Leslie Phillips. Did you know that "up to scratch" is a term derived from boxing? It turns out that in the 1740s a line was scratched across the centre of boxing arenas. Rounds ended in those days only when a man was knocked down. Whether to embark on another round depended on whether the contestants could both make it to the scratch: if they couldn't, the fight was over. Ask me anything, go on. But if you'll excuse me — jab, jab, feint, *toof, toof* — I've got some research to do.





Richmond release four as crisis bites

RUGBY UNION

By Mark Souster and Alasdair Reid

FOUR players have been released by Richmond in a first wave of redundancies aimed at cutting costs at the Allied Dunbar Premiership club. Laurent Cabannes, Dominic Chapman, Adrian Davies and Jim Hamilton-Smith have had their contracts terminated but may continue playing as amateurs. They are joined by six administrative staff, who have also lost their jobs.

The cuts were instigated after a review by administrators, who took over the running of the club at the beginning of the week when Ashley Levett withdrew his financial support. Players have also accepted reductions in salary of either 10 or 20 per cent, dependent on levels of income. Among them is Ben Clarke, the captain.

"You have to lead by example," Clarke said yesterday. "It has not been an easy week for anyone at the club, but we have to put that behind us as far as is possible in the circumstances in preparing for Saturday's game [against Bath]."

Clarke, who joined Richmond on a three-year contract reputedly worth £100,000 a year, added: "We as players realise our importance and contribution to the business. There has been a fantastic response from everybody. Of course it is unsettling, but you have to face and accept reality."

Newcastle Falcons, Richmond's opponents in the semi-finals of the Tetley's Bitter Cup, appear to find it easier to attract millionaire backers than supporters. In the wake of the departure of Sir John Hall, the club said yesterday that Dave Thompson and Paul Mackings, both wealthy local businessmen, had become chairman and chief executive respectively of the Premiership champions.

Thompson has acquired the 76 per cent shareholding previously held by Hall's Sporting Club for a nominal fee. As Newcastle's debts have also been written off, his money will be used to underwrite future losses. The business expertise he acquired before retiring from the successful information technology company he founded and ran will be directed towards keeping those losses to a minimum.

Denying that there would be significant impact on the playing squad, Thompson, 55, argued that the viability of the club depended upon boosting attendances. "I need time to produce a five-year plan, evaluating all the issues," he said. "I believe supporters will come to the club if they feel comfortable in their surroundings."

Squaring the financial circle will not be easy. Even with full houses, Kingston Park's 5,500 capacity is well short of what is needed to support a wage-bill estimated at around £1 million a year. The average attendance this season has been less than 3,500. Rob Andrew, the director of rugby, will also take a seat on the board. He will remain registered as a player but his appearances next season are likely to be kept to a minimum.

Leicester have decided not to appeal against Austin Healey's extended five-week ban imposed by the Rugby Football Union for stamping. Healey will not be able to play again until April 10.

Graham Henry, the Wales coach, yesterday attempted to broker a peace formula that will prevent further disciplinary action being taken against Swansea and Cardiff by the Welsh Rugby Union (WRU). The rebel clubs faced the prospect of being thrown out of the SWALEC Cup last night for refusing to pay fines of £150,000 imposed for playing unsanctioned matches against England's leading clubs.

At separate meetings with both clubs, Henry was accompanied by Vernon Pugh. Although only a national representative on the WRU, the involvement of the influential International Rugby Board chairman is highly significant. Henry has made it clear that the rift in Welsh rugby must be healed if the nation's playing fortunes are to improve. This week he and Robert Howley, the Wales captain, have called for peace, amid hopes that the victory in Paris on Saturday would signal a rapprochement between the warring factions.

The signs were that it was a forlorn hope. Both clubs are adamant that they will not pay the fines, the deadline for which passed on February 28, while, publicly at least, the WRU is maintaining a hardline stance.

No shame in failure to cope with audacity

GERALD DAVIES



Rugby Union Commentary

In the aftermath of Wales's victory against France last week, there was a good deal of comment about the lack of really sound first-line defence from both teams. Since there was so much running and so many gaps appearing, the defences must have been at fault, it was argued.

There are those who reason that a team's attack cannot be so good that it cannot be explained by a fundamentally flawed defence, while the converse is rarely promoted: a team's sound defence is never explained by the opposition's ineffectual attack. Tackling, after all, is more easily quantifiable than the subtlety that is often required to score a try.

Jean-Claude Skrela, the France coach, was the first to raise the matter. It is the coach's role, after all, to draw attention to and even accentuate the failings of his team in defeat. His job thereafter is to remedy those weaknesses.

Graham Henry, his opposite number, mentioned the point, too, but his comment was more psychological than practical. In all the excitement and the celebration in his camp he had to pick on something in order to keep his players' feet rooted to the ground.

There is always a tendency to condemn a failure in defence when a try is scored. There is an assumption that since a player is within reaching distance of the man with the ball, a successful tackle can be accomplished. This is patently not so. Scott Gibbs, for example, was within touching distance of Keith Wood in the game against Ireland but a swift and unexpected shimmy from the hooker found the Wales centre, one of the hardest and most consistent tacklers in the business, at sixes and sevens.

> 'Wales have adopted a high-risk strategy'

This happened in open play and resulted from a Welsh error and an immediate counter-attack of the type French coaches have been preaching to their team. Last Saturday, both Wales and France attacked from deep within their own territory and when the opposition least expected it. It is unfair to pinpoint defensive weaknesses in a game in which both teams were intent on attack and using the width of the pitch as often as possible.

Keeping the play confined around the fringes of ruck and maul, not letting the ball go beyond the inside centre or arrange such movements that the ball returns to the mauls is a sure way of keeping the tackle count high. The play is in limited space and tactics performed to a precise pattern. Since there is little risk, errors are few.

What tackling there was in Paris was, in fact, good. Quite simply there was less of it because of the nature of the game. To improve the tackling all the teams needed to do was to change the basis of their tactics:; to be less expansive in other words. This is partly what happened in the second half. Relatively speaking, it was a more restrained period after the extravagances of the first 40 minutes.

It does say a vast amount for rugby that the laws can still allow two such contrasting matches as occurred at Stade de France and Lansdowne Road.

If one game appealed more to the eye than the other, this does not mean that the other was less engaging to the mind. It should be rugby's fervent hope that it can retain the capacity for different strategies. The attraction of the Wales v England fixture next month will be to see how the two countries, who, on the evidence so far, employ widely different tactics, will respond to the other.

England's orientation is towards their mighty pack of forwards, although their coach's desire, I fancy, is for something more varied. Wales, in all three of their fixtures, have had no real choice at their disposal, as their coach freely admits, but to go for the high-risk strategy.

In consequence they have paid the price in two matches but have gained richly from the events of the third. Henry is not for turning nor, it seems, are his players. Now that each country knows what to expect of the other, might they not wish to modify their strategies? If not, then which style will come out on top?

GOLF

James adds rider to art of Cup captaincy

FROM MEL WEBB IN MALAGA

FROM the day that Mark James was announced as the Europe Ryder Cup captain it was obvious that he would bring to the post a different style to that of his predeccesor. In the lead-up to the match Severiano Ballesteros grew increasingly intense; James will not. During the Ryder Cup itself, Ballesteros scurried hither and yon like an ant on speed; James, be assured, will do everything at his own, unhurried pace.

The contrast in approach was highlighted again yesterday when it was noticed that James, having just had a 67 to put himself in joint second place with 11 others in the Turespaña Masters at the Parador Málaga del Golf, had played alongside John Bickerton.

Bickerton has compiled three top-ten finishes to come from nowhere into eighth place in the European order of merit and on to the fringe of the top dozen in the Ryder Cup points list, and somebody wondered if James had asked to play with him to run his magisterial eye over him. Ballesteros often did so during his captaincy, but James, trademark heavy irony aloft, mock-bridled at the very suggestion.

"I certainly didn't," he said. "In fact, I'm determined not to change any draw this season. If guys are trying to make an impression, you should not do anything to put more pressure on them."

James's praiseworthy stance reveals his integrity and shows, too, the benefit of having been in a similar position himself in the Ryder Cup — seven times, as a matter of fact. When you are trying to break free of the peloton, the last thing you want is your team captain climbing all over your mudguards.

James did, though, admit that there were circumstances in which he would consider tampering with the draw. "If I found that I was paired with somebody who is on the limit, I might ask not to play with them," he said. A good egg is Mark James.

His joint best round of the year left him two strokes off a blistering pace set by Paolo Quirici, who had nine birdies in his 65, seven under par. For years, the Swiss was a golfing equivalent of Nottingham Forest — too good for the first division (the Challenge Tour), not good enough for the Premiership (the European Tour) — but last year he made the final broke through into a comfortable midtable position.

To continue the analogy, if he were to keep this form up he would challenge for a place in Europe, or at least its golf team. And is he likely to? Hardly. One round does not a summer make and Quirici is unlikely to be in the same place at the end of the tournament. Neither should Darren Clarke, who disappointed with a subdued 73. Clarke spent four hours on the practice ground after he had stomped off the course. James did not go and watch.



Bickerton unleashes a drive during his round of 68 alongside James yesterday. Photograph: Paul Severn/Allsport

LINKS

WEBSITE:
www.europeantour.com — Daily updates from Turespaña on official tour site

TELEVISION:
Sky Sports 1, 1pm (live) 7.30pm (highlights)

Pepper makes fiery start

FROM PATRICIA DAVIES IN TUCSON

MORNING was the time to play in the first round of the Welch's/Circle K Championship, at Randolph Park, Tucson, Arizona, yesterday, if the weather forecasters were to be believed. What began as a gentle, desert day, ideal for scoring, was going to turn into a dust-blowing, rip-roaring one, with winds of 30 miles an hour.

Dottie Pepper, the United States Solheim Cup player, started as she meant to go on with a birdie three at the 10th, her first hole, and at the turn she was four under par, one shot ahead of the rest.

Se Ri Pak, of South Korea, who won two major championships as a 20-year-old rookie last season, was in the chasing group, one shot behind, alongside a host of Americans that included Juli Inkster, Danielle Ammaccapane and Tammie Green, who no longer has the bump that aroused such interest at the Solheim Cup last September. The bump is now a little girl called Tina Marie, who arrived on December 3.

Se Ri, who started with a searing burst of three successive birdies, has recovered from the mass hysteria that greeted her return home last year — she spent several days in hospital, unable to speak or eat — and is learning to say no to requests. "Golf is fun. It doesn't make me tired," she said, "but around golf makes me tired sometime, sometime upset. I need 50-50, good balance of myself and my game."

Lisa Hackney, of Staffordshire and Florida, who started at the 10th, was out in one under par after a birdie four at the 18th.

FOR THE RECORD

BADMINTON

BIRMINGHAM: All-England championships: Men: Singles: First round: P Gade Christensen (Den) bt M Mainaky (Indo) 15-12, 15-11, S Bakshi (Indo) bt P Hinder (Eng) 15-9, 11-15, 15-6; P Janum (Den) bt G Bruystens (Holl) 15-5, 15-12; A Boesen (Den) bt R Doling (Eng) 15-10, 15-5; K Jonassen (Den) bt R Milroy (Can) 15-8, 15-4; D Palyama bt B Decker (Ger) 15-9, 11-15, 15-7; T Stuer-Lauridsen (Den) bt F Kohler (Den) 15-7, 15-2, Chen Gang (China) bt R Nock (Eng) 15-12, 15-3; P-E Hoyer-Larsen (Den) bt B Kessov (Bul) 15-1, 15-7; F Permadi (Taiwan) bt C Robertson (Scot) 15-3, 15-4, J Hadikusuma (Japan) bt Ahn Jae-Cheng (S Kor) 15-12, 15-2, K Odum (Den) bt M Constable (Eng) 13-15, 15-8, 15-9; Xia Xuanze (China) bt P Gopichand (Indo) 15-13, 15-5; P Knowles (Eng) bt T Ohtsuka (Japan) 15-6, 15-12. Second round: Knowles bt R Sidek (Malaysia) 12-15, 15-13, ret; T Hidyat (Indo) bt Park Tae-sang (S Kor) 15-6, 17-16, R Hashim (Malaysia) bt Odum 15-5, 15-1, Permadi bt R Agustinus (Indo) 15-10, 15-7, C Haughton (Eng) bt M Dells (Den) 15-4, 15-6; Hoyer-Larsen bt Xia Xuanze 15-11, 15-11; Gade Christensen bt R Juijen (Bel) 15-5, 15-6; Wong Choon Hann (Malaysia) bt Boesen 15-2, 15-7; Stuer Lauridsen bt Chen Gang 15-4, 10-15, 15-12; B Santoso (Indo) bt Chen Wei (China) 15-8, 15-6, Hendrawan (Indo) bt K Fangel (Den) 15-10, 15-6; Bakshi bt J Fischer (Den) 15-9, 15-13; Palyama bt B Flockhart (Scot) 15-7, 13-15, 15-7; Hadikusuma bt Janum 6-15, 15-10, 15-6; F Machida (Japan) bt N Lasman (Fr) 15-5, 7-15, 15-8, I Wijaya (Indo) bt Jonassen 15-13, 9-15, 15-13. Womens Singles: First round: M Pohar (Slovenia) bt D Julien (Can) 11-5, 4-11, 13-12; S Ekmongkolpaisarn (Thai) bt H Schonherting (Ger) 11-5, 11-0; Huang Chia-Chi (Taiwan) bt T Hallam (Eng) 11-5, 11-6; E Angelino (Indo) bt B Beenhakker (Holl) 7-11, 11-7, 13-10; S Dimbour (Fr) bt Lee Hyo-Jung (S Kor) 1-11, 11-8, 13-10, M Sorensen (Den) bt Joo Hyun Hee (S Kor) 11-3, 11-0; Cindana (Indo) bt Kim Ji-Hyun (S Kor) 11-6, 2-11, 11-5. Second round: Gong Ruina (China) bt J Wilmott (Eng) 11-2, 11-4, J Meulendijks (Holl) bt Pohar 11-4, 11-1, Angelino bt K Morgan (Wales) 11-8, 11-8; Dai Jun (China) bt K Michalowsky (Ger) 11-1, 11-3; Ye Zhaoying (China) bt K Solmundson (Can) 11-2, 11-5, Gong Zhichao (China) bt L Djaelawidyaya (Indo) 11-5, 11-4, C Martin (Den) bt S McGinn (Ire) 11-1, 11-0; Lee Kyung-won (S Kor) bt Ekmongkolpaisarn 11-2, 5-11, 11-1; Cindana bt S Watt (Scot) 11-2, 11-2; M Audina (Indo) bt C Reid (Can) 11-2, 11-1, K Yonekura (Japan) bt J Pittard (Eng) 11-0, 11-3, Chia-Chi bt J Szieszynska (Pol) 11-1, 11-0; Y Mizui (Japan) bt C Sorensen (Den) 11-2, 11-4; M Tanaka (Japan) bt Meiluawati (Indo) 13-11, 11-7; Sorensen bt Dimbour 11-4, 11-6; Zhou Mi (China) bt T Rasmussen (Den) 11-2, 13-10.

SNOW REPORTS

SKI CLUB

	Depth (cm) L	Depth (cm) U	Conditions Piste	Conditions Runs to Resort	Conditions Off/p	Weather (5pm)	°C	Last snow
Austria								
Kitzbühel	60	170	Fair	Slushy	Heavy	Rain	6	11/3
Söll	80	210	Good	Open	Powder	Snow	-1	11/3
St Anton	90	560	Fair	Open	Heavy	Sun	4	11/3
Canada								
Lake Louise	145	169	Good	Open	Powder	Sun	-2	7/3
France								
Alpe d'Huez	175	350	Good	Open	Spring	Sun	5	8/3
Argentiere	100	390	Good	Open	Varied	Cloud	3	8/3
Flaine	165	600	Good	Slushy	Varied	Sun	15	8/3
La Clusaz	95	280	Good	Slushy	Varied	Fine	14	8/3
La Plagne	180	280	Good	Slushy	Heavy	Sun	10	8/3
La Tania	166	280	Good	Open	Varied	Fine	6	8/3
Megève	125	295	Good	Slushy	Varied	Fine	14	6/3
Méribel	100	280	Good	Slushy	Heavy	Fine	9	8/3
Tignes	170	280	Good	Open	Heavy	Sun	2	10/3
Val Thorens	220	370	Good	Slushy	Heavy	Sun	10	8/3
Val d'Isère	129	315	Good	Open	Varied	Sun	-4	10/3
Italy								
Cervinia	130	210	Good	Open	Powder	Fine	1	11/3
Cortina	65	130	Good	Slushy	Heavy	Sun	3	7/3
Livigno	96	212	Good	Open	Crusty	Fine	4	9/3
M di Campiglio	70	140	Good	Open	Varied	Sun	6	9/3
Switzerland								
Davos	165	310	Good	Open	Heavy	Sun	[illegible]	7/3
Grindelwald	80	320	Good	Slushy	Heavy	Rain	8	6/3
Klosters	90	290	Good	Open	Crusty	Fine	8	9/3
Murren	120	350	Good	Closed	Heavy	Sun	0	6/3
Saas Fee	100	390	Good	Slushy	Heavy	Cloud	5	11/3
St Moritz	90	200	Good	Open	Varied	Fine	7	6/3
Verbier	95	200	Good	Slushy	Heavy	Sun	4	10/3
Villars	80	280	Good	Open	Heavy	Cloud	10	8/3
Wengen	130	180	Good	Open	Heavy	Sun	5	6/3
Zermatt	85	280	Good	Open	Varied	Sun	3	6/3
United States								
Aspen	136	160	Good	Open	Powder	Cloud	1	10/3
Deer Valley	215	240	Good	Open	Powder	Sun	0	9/3

http://www.skiclub.co.uk — L = lower slopes; U = upper slopes

BASKETBALL

BUDWEISER LEAGUE: Derby Storm 78 Edinburgh Rocks 102.
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION (NBA): Indiana 93 New Jersey 82; Philadelphia 85 Charlotte 70; Washington 97 Detroit 87, Miami 88 Atlanta 78; Milwaukee 101 Seattle 97; San Antonio 81 Orlando 79, Phoenix 73 Cleveland 86, Los Angeles Lakers 94 Los Angeles Clippers 75.

BOXING

GUILDHALL, Cambridge: Varsity match: Cambridge 4 Oxford 5 (Cambridge names first: Featherweight: D Otuno bt J Colayco pts. Light: R Platt wo J Banks. Light-welter C Newman bt R Gutsell rsc. Welter N Doris lost to E Cartwright rsc 1st. Light-middle: J Matthews bt R Gaudet ko 1st. Middle E Oragui lost to R Knowles rsc 2nd. Middle 2: A Wilson lost to N Hardy pts. Light-heavy M Elkington lost to B Sharp ko 1st. Heavy O Slack lost to N Mullins rsc 1st).

CRICKET

Second Test match

New Zealand v South Africa

CHRISTCHURCH (First day of five, New Zealand won toss). South Africa, with all first-innings wickets in hand, are 114 runs behind New Zealand

NEW ZEALAND: First innings

M J Horne c Kirsten b Kallis	35
B A Young b Donald	5
R G Twose c Cullinan b Pollock	0
N J Astle c Klusener b Donald	44
G R Stead c Boucher b Donald	27
C Z Harris c Adams b Pollock	0
† A C Parore c sub b Pollock	14
*D J Nash lbw b Adams	14
D L Vettori lbw b Adams	18
S B Doull c Boucher b Pollock	0
G I Allott not out	1
Extras (lb 4, nb 5)	9
Total	168

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-13, 2-18, 3-60, 4-112, 5-115, 6-115, 7-138, 8-157, 9-157.
BOWLING: Donald 17.5-4-54-3; Pollock 17-5-34-4; Klusener 12-3-37-0; Kallis 5-1-21-1, Cronje 6 1-4-9-0; Adams 5 4-2-9-2

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings

G Kirsten not out	35
H H Gibbs not out	15
Extras (lb 2, nb 2)	4
Total (no wkt)	54

J H Kallis, D J Cullinan, *W J Cronje, J N Rhodes, S M Pollock, † M V Boucher, L Klusener, P R Adams and A A Donald to bat.
BOWLING: Doull 6.5-2-6-0; Allott 9-2-29-0; Nash 4-0-15-0; Astle 0.1-0-0-0; Vettori 4-3-1-0; Stead 1-0-1-0.
Umpires: K T Francis (Sri Lanka) and D M Quested.

SHEFFIELD SHIELD: First day of four: Melbourne: Victoria 263 (M P Mott 108, I J Harvey 77; J Angel 5-64), Western Australia 0-0. Adelaide: Queensland 239 (M L Hayden 77, P Wilson 5-68); South Australia 19-1. Hobart: Tasmania 265-6 (J Cox 128) v New South Wales

CYCLING

PARIS-NICE RACE: Fifth stage (Cusson to Firminy, 187km): 1, S Botero (Col) 4hr 43min 58sec; 2, M Boogerd (Holl) at same time; 3, M Wauters (Bel) 29sec. British placing: 66, C Boardman 15min 30sec. Leading overall positions: 1, Boogerd 20hr 27min 28sec; 2, A Tchmil (Bel) at 16sec; 3, Wauters 24. British placing: Boardman 36min 33sec.

FOOTBALL

Wednesday's late results

FA CUP: Sixth-round replay: Chelsea 0 Man Utd 2
FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: Blackburn 1 Everton 2; Derby 2 Aston Villa 1, Leeds 2 Tottenham 0, Nottm Forest 1 Newcastle 2.
NATIONWIDE LEAGUE: Second division: Stoke 0 Reading 4.
SCOTTISH LEAGUE: First division: Clydebank 1 Falkirk 2.
DR MARTENS LEAGUE: Midland division: Newport AFC 2 Paget 1; Solihull Borough 5 Blakenall 3, VS Rugby 3 RC Warwick 1
RYMAN LEAGUE: First division: Molesey 0 Canvey Island 0
HIGHLAND LEAGUE: Clachnacuddin 4 Forres Mechanics 1, Keith 1 Rothes 0, Peterhead 2 Cove 3
AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First division: Norwich 2 Barnet 1, Charlton 0 Portsmouth 1, Colchester 6 Cambridge 1; Northampton 3 Millwall 0, Queens Park Rangers 3 Luton 1, Tottenham 6 Swindon 2, Wimbledon 0 Wycombe 0
PONTIN'S LEAGUE: First division: Tranmere 2 Barnsley 3. Second division: Wrexham 2 Huddersfield 3. Third division: Hartlepool 1 Wigan 2. League Cup: Quarter-final: Stockport 3 York 2.
NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE: Premier division: Hallam 6 Staveley MW 1
COMPLETE MUSIC HELLENIC LEAGUE: Premier division: Cirencester Academy 0 Wantage 0; EFC Cheltenham 2 Carterton 1, Tuffley 2 Almondsbury 0
JEWSON WESSEX LEAGUE CUP: Semi-final, first leg: Cowes Sports 0 Eastleigh 0
LEAGUE OF WALES: Aberystwyth 3 Carmarthen 2, Caernarfon 3 Newtown 1: Conwy 2 Holywell 1, Cwmbran 6 Rhyl 1, Haverfordwest 1 Rhayader 0
UNIJET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE: John O'Hara League Cup: Semi-final: Burgess Hill 4 Eastbourne Town 1.
INTERNATIONAL MATCHES: Romania 0 Israel 2 (in Bucharest), Greece 3 Croatia 2 (in Athens), Hungary 1 Bosnia 1 (in Budapest); Switzerland 2 Austria 4 (in St Gallen), Luxembourg 1 Iceland 2 (in Luxembourg)
BELGIAN LEAGUE: Lokeren 3 Westerlo 0; Kortrijk 1 Genk 3.
DUTCH CUP: Quarter-final: Feyenoord 2 Vitesse Arnhem 1 (Feyenoord win on golden goal rule)
GERMAN CUP: Semi-final: VfL Wolfsburg 0 Werder Bremen 1
FRENCH LEAGUE: Lens 1 Montpellier 0; Lorient 1 Rennes 1, Lyons 2 Auxerre 1, Monaco 0 Metz 0; Paris Saint-Germain 0 Nantes 0; Strasbourg 1 Bastia 1, Toulouse 0 Le Havre 0
ITALIAN CUP: Fiorentina 2 Bologna 2 (aet. Fiorentina win 4-2 on agg)

GOLF

MALAGA: Turespaña Masters: Leading first-round scores (Great Britain and Ireland): 65: P Quirici (Switz) 67: A Cabrera (Arg), D Borrego (Sp), R Winchester, M James, C Hanell (Swe), F Jacobson (Swe), F Lindgren (Swe), D Edlund (Swe), G Orr, P-U Johansson (Swe), I Garbutt, R Gonzalez (Arg) 68: M Tunnicliff, J Bickerton, K Tomori (Japan), T Gögele (Ger), J M Carriles (Sp). A Hansen (Den), G Owen. 69: D Smyth, M Pinero (Sp), M A Martin (Sp), B Davis, M Olander (Swe), D Cooper, P Broadhurst, D Gilford, M Scarpa (It), M Farry (Fr), M A Jiménez (Sp), M Pilkington, S Webster, M Florioli (It), I Giner (Sp), S Torrance, V Phillips, A McLardy (SA), P Fulke (Swe). Other scores: 71: S Ballesteros (Sp). 72: J M Olazabal (Sp), D Clarke (GB)

HOCKEY

NATIONAL LEAGUE (NHL): Carolina 2 Pittsburgh 3 (OT), New York Rangers 0 Ottawa 3, Chicago 5 Nashville 2; Dallas 7 Edmonton 4, Anaheim 4 Vancouver 4

RUGBY UNION

AIB LEAGUE: Second division: Dungannon 53 Derry 17.

SNOOKER

SHANGHAI: China International: Second round: A McManus (Scot) bt M King (Eng) 5-4, P Davies (Wales) bt M Williams (Wales) 5-2. Quarter-finals: W Snaddon (Scot) bt S Lee (Eng) 5-3, S Hendry (Scot) bt J Parrott (Eng) 5-2

TENNIS

INDIAN WELLS, California: Champions Cup: Second round: M Rios (Chile) bt C Pioline (Fr) 7-6, 6-1, X Malisse (Bel) bt G Ivanisevic (Cro) 7-6, 6-3, K Kucera (Slovakia) bt L Hewitt (Aus) 7-5, 6-3, J Siemerink (Holl) bt F Meligeni (Br) 6-4, 2-6, 6-4, G Rusedski (GB) bt S Draper (US) 6-3, 6-3, R Krajicek (Holl) bt J-M Gambill (US) 6-7, 7-5, 7-5, C Woodruff (US) bt P Haarhuis (Holl) 7-6, 6-3; M Safin (Russ) bt J Gimelstob (US) 6-2, 7-6, M Philippoussis (Aus) bt A Corretja (Sp) 4-6, 7-5, 6-2, T Martin (US) bt F Clavet (Sp) 6-2, 3-6, 7-6, F Mantilla (Sp) bt P Sampras (US) 6-7, 3-6, 6-3, C Moya (Sp) bt J Courier (US) 7-6, 6-4. WTA Evert Cup: Quarter-finals: S Testud (Fr) bt H Nagyova (Slovakia) 6-1, 6-3; C Rubin (US) bt M Hingis (Switz) 6-3, 7-6; S Graf (Ger) bt J Novotna (Cz) 6-2, 6-0, S Williams (US) bt M Pierce (Fr) 7-5, 7-6.

TODAY'S FIXTURES

FOOTBALL

Kick-off 7.30 unless stated
* denotes all-ticket

Nationwide League

Second division

* Bristol Rovers v Fulham (7.45)

UNIBOND LEAGUE: Premier division: Emley v Worksop
THE TIMES FA YOUTH CUP: Fifth round: Newcastle v Middlesbrough
SMIRNOFF IRISH LEAGUE: First division: Limavady v Dungannon Swifts.
FAI HARP NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: St Patrick's Ath v Bohemians (7.45).
FA PREMIER ACADEMY LEAGUE: Under-19: Coventry v Peterborough (1.0); QPR v Wimbledon (1.0), Sheffield Wednesday v Nottingham Forest (1.0). Under-17: Peterborough v Coventry (1.0).

RUGBY LEAGUE

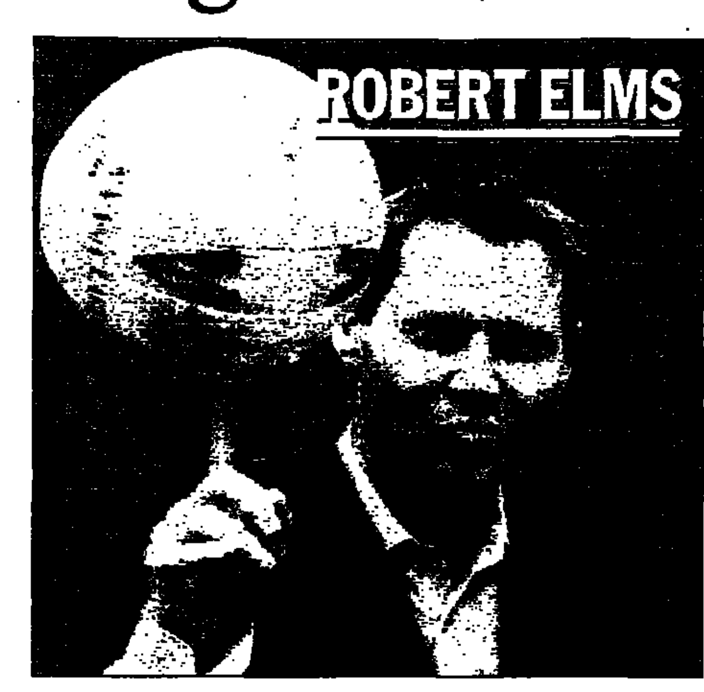
Northern Ford Premiership

Oldham v Barrow (7.45)

OTHER SPORT

BASKETBALL: Budweiser League: Newcastle Eagles v Leicester Riders (7.30).
MOTOR RALLYING: Vauxhall Rally of Wales
ROWING: Schools Head of the River (Barnes Bridge to Putney). Under-15 (11.0) Senior (12.15).

Football's new luvvies wrong to view Eighties as decayed



For the past fortnight a series of highfalutin, highly intellectual debates under the title "Edge Of A Dream" have been taking place at the Royal Festival Hall. It's been an attempt to analyse "the cultural and stylistic impact of the 1980s" with the likes of Andrew Marr and Polly Toynbee, Peter York and Bill Buford, Blake Morrison and Andrew Motion.

Despite covering almost every base from fashion to literature, pop to politics, there was not a single seminar on the great game. (Especially strange given that, at the end of the Eighties, Buford wrote *Among The Thugs*, the most risibly silly bit of soccer slumming ever attempted by an American academic in Doc Martens and arguably the first sign of the literati and the luvvies noticing what millions of ordinary souls actually did every Saturday.)

We've had the Eighties pop revival with Duran Duran, Culture Club and Heaven 17, so it's about time we reassessed the footballing decade that dare not speak its name. The Sixties are endlessly mythologised. The Seventies — sideburns, long hair, Chopper Harris, Leeds United *et al* — are seen as some misty-eyed golden age. Yet for some reason (OK, Heysel and Hillsborough are both very good reasons), the Eighties are rarely celebrated, despite the fact that the tightest shorts worn in public outside of the annual Gay Pride Parade were sported week in, week out.

Certainly one of the good things about the Eighties is that it was a time when supporters were infinitely better dressed than players. Which is surely as it should be. These days, football is horribly fashionable and its stars appear in fashion shows and dress in Armani while fans are woefully inelegant. A dozen years ago, though, footballers wore shell-suits and football was deemed profoundly un-chic. Yet the fans were immaculate. You didn't see flocks of sheep donning acrylic replica strips designed by the chairman's sister-in-law. Instead the terraces (remember those?) were the catwalks of the masses as style wars were fought out by legions of narcissistic casuals boasting the latest *de rigueur* designer duds. (Often "liberated" during continental shopping sprees that coincided with European games.)

The reason that such vicious sartorial battles took place in our charmingly antique and bijou stadiums is actually that the violence, usually considered to have been an Eighties problem, had largely subsided by then, at least inside the grounds.

It was actually in the late Sixties and Seventies that the football ghettos were at their most perilous. By the Eighties the hordes of consenting juveniles, who posed and preened on the rigorously policed ends, had largely sublimated their aggression into a magnificently bizarre and thoroughly British fashion phenomena, which would have kept armies of semioticians in government grants. Except no self-respecting academics or sensitive arty archetypes ever soiled their flared denims by venturing to something as thoroughly déclassé as a football match.

> 'Legions of Jeremy-come-latelys pontificate outside Highbury'

Now that there are legions of Jeremy-come-latelys queueing outside Highbury and pontificating on every aspect of the game, it's easy to forget how lowly football was deemed to be in the Eighties. Fans were frogmarched and strip-searched, vilified and demonised. We were England's cultural untouchables, sneeringly described by Martin Amis as "having the breath and complexion of a packet of cheese and onion crisps". Now, in the sanitised Nineties, Amis is a born-again football fanatic.

You had really to love the game to go in the 1980s, but then you *could* go in the 1980s. The people who play and profit from the sport may love sold-out grounds, but it's a bitch for fans, who get ripped off and locked out.

Entry then was still cheap and you could pretty much pick any match and turn up on the day. I regularly went to Arsenal v Spurs derbies, despite caring little for either lot. The atmosphere was always thrillingly belligerent while essentially safe, the singing joyous if virulent and the stylistic statements fascinating.

Football in the 1980s had its back to the crumbling, graffiti-covered wall; it was embattled, embittered but immaculately turned out. All in all it was a bit like being at war. And as in so many conflicts, the survivors remember it as the time of our lives. Especially because Chelsea were spectacularly useless for the entire time.

My prediction a few weeks ago that we would have to suffer an Arsenal v Tottenham Hotspur FA Cup Final is now looking a distinct possibility. And, as a result, we are witnessing a phenomenon that I can only call Final-a-phobia. Shaky Spurs fans, who have witnessed the impressive form of their neighbours with more than a little dread, are scared witless of the possibility of handing Arsenal the double double. One of them said to me: "I would rather go out in the semi-final than face the ignominy of losing to the Gooners in the big one at Wembley."

A letter arrived on my desk recently on House of Commons headed notepaper. No, it wasn't an invitation to take over from David Mellor as head of the Football Task Force, but a response from Steve Pound, Labour MP for Ealing North, whose name I had taken in vain in this column. I had joked about how, in the aftermath of the Ron Davies-Clapham Common affair, he was receiving a little stick at Westminster for the "Up The Cottagers" sticker he displays proudly in the back of his car.

Amid much joshing about the present success of his side, he admitted, with some sadness, that his eight-year-old son has rejected the Riversiders in favour of QPR. The biggest problem he faced was explaining to one so young why the Rangers fanzine is called *A Kick Up The R's* (surely not as tricky as *One F in Fulham*, his own team's fan rag) — but he could have a far more tricky bit of explaining soon to do.

There are plans afoot by some merry Fulham supporters to celebrate their expected promotion by dressing up for the last game of the season in full leather queen gear, to revel in their contentious nickname. Handlebar moustaches, biker boots and *caps, chaps, thongs, a type of attire rarely seen at* football grounds. It's just a good job that they aren't playing Liverpool that day.



It is well known that Stephen Fry has a strong streak of yellow running through him — he is a life-long and still devoted Norwich City fan — but it comes as more of a surprise to learn that the heir apparent to the Wildean crown, one of the most urbanely brilliant minds in Great Britain, has become besotted by arguably the most lumpen sport of them all.

On *Parkinson* the other week, Fry admitted that he had been spellbound by the aesthetic and artistic merits of this year's Embassy world darts championship final, from the glittering arena of dreams that is the Lakeside Country Club in Frimley Green.

Hearing him wax lyrical about the new Dutch masters, Raymond Barneveld and Co Stompe (do they play total darts, I wonder?), the organisers, anxious to drag their sport upmarket, spotted a PR coup and invited Fry to the final next year.

So if you see a large, not particularly athletic-looking chap, glass and fag in hand, deep in concentration down Frimley Green way and he isn't one of the players, no, you haven't been drinking more than Cliff Lazarenko and it isn't Barry Fry. Providing, that is, that one hurdle can be overcome.

"I'm looking forward to it immensely," Fry said from his table at Le Caprice in Mayfair. "Except I'm not exactly sure where Frimley is."

BOWLS

Scotland have prize in sight

By David Rhys Jones

SCOTLAND, who beat Wales on Wednesday, took two steps towards retaining the Hilton Trophy yesterday, first when they defeated Ireland by 45 shots in the home international series at Bournemouth yesterday morning, then when England, who were expected to be their closest challengers, were surprisingly beaten by a spirited Welsh side.

With five winning rinks out of six, the Scots suffered a surprising reverse on the rink skipped by Alex Marshall, who won the world indoor singles championship in January. Marshall's brother, Robert, was skipping on an adjacent rink and the contrasting fortunes of the two men was the talk of the stadium.

Alex Marshall, who was 15-10 ahead at 12 ends, lost 30-18 to a rink skipped by Noel Graham, of Belfast; Robert Marshall was level, 12-12, with the rink of Gary McCloy after 11 ends, but went on to win, 33-13.

Graham Robertson, who was 15-0 ahead after nine ends, and Graeme Archer, who scored 15 shots to five in the second half, returned winning cards of 26-12 and 27-12 respectively, while Willie Wood and Jim Muir won by more modest margins.

The 26-9 victory by John Price over David Cutler laid the foundations for the Wales win over England, but the form of Jeff Webley, who is skipping for his country for the first time this week, was a revelation.

Scottish hopes of winning the British team title for the eighth time in nine years are now high. Even if they were to lose to England today, the Scots are still likely to win the championship on shots countback, having established a healthy advantage of 74 shots in earlier games.

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 46

HEADAGE
(b) The number of animals, taken from *head*. "Abbey-Cwm-Hir Fox Destruction Society have decided to pay headage money on rabbits and carrion crows, as well as foxes, that are killed in the society's area."

MOUTAN
(c) The tree peony, *Paeonia suffruticosa*, of the family Ranunculaceae, a large shrub bearing pale pink flowers, native to China and Tibet.

LAULAU
(b) A portion of a Hawaiian dish of meat and fish wrapped in leaves and steamed or baked. Also, this cover of leaves. Hawaiian, reduplicated form of *lau* a leaf.

INTERFERON
(a) A protein released by an animal cell, usually in response to a virus, which has the property of inhibiting further development of viruses of any kind in the animal. "The investigation of interferon, a chemical substance produced in men and animals and believed to act as the body's first line of defence against a wide range of virus infections, passed a critical stage in May 1962."

SOLUTION TO WINNING MOVE

Solution: 1Bxg6! fxg6 2 f7+ Be5 3 Qf6+! Bxf6 4 Bxf6 checkmate.

TELEVISION CHOICE

Laughter for charity

Comic Relief: Red Nose Day 1999
BBC1, 7pm

The annual knees-up goes on until 1am, live as always, so often subject to changes. But you can count on the usual suspects to bounce the fund-raising along. Hosts include Lenny Henry, Denise Van Outen, Zoë Ball, French & Saunders, Julian Clary, Jack Dee and Jonathan Ross. "Alan Partridge" takes over from 9pm to 9.30pm on BBC2 and then it's back to Lenny. Thanks to Channel 4 we've also got Chris Evans for a special *TFI Comic Relief*. And megastars appear in the oddest places ... Johnny Depp, Woody Allen, Matt Damon, Whitney Houston, David Bowie, Elton John. To jaunt you back to sobriety there will be, as usual, plenty of those sometimes hard-to-watch film inserts about Third World poverty and how Comic Relief projects are tackling it.

Gerri Halliwell sees how Comic Relief helps people around the world (BBC1)

Return to the Lost Gardens of Heligan
Channel 4, 8pm

And so we say farewell ... to the memorable Cornish gardens and the double series about restoring them to their former glory. More than 300 years old and cared for through the early years by the Tremayne family "in the big house", the 150-acre estate is virtually perfect again. The Sun Dial Garden looks exquisite and John Nelson and Tim Smit are in their boat to further explore "the Lost Valley". Reminiscent of Monet this, with its luminous water paths and arched bridge into nowhere. As there isn't anyone in the big house now to finance the gardens, it is essential that visitors supply the funding and last year's dripping summer didn't help.

Trust Me, I'm a Doctor
BBC2, 8pm (except Northern Ireland)

Dr Hammond opens his show gulping a hamburger and confesses that he likes junk food. No wonder one warms to the man. But he then goes on to explain how stuffing it down contributes to, er, gas. "The average adult produces a litre of gas a day." There are myriad "good" bacteria in the intestines which break down our food and help to cause the wind — but the bacteria themselves can be humoured as you'll see. Also brace yourself for an elderly patient who gets her severely ulcerated leg treated with maggots. These creatures went out of fashion when antibiotics came in, but now that so many superbugs are defeating this medicine the maggots are back and being purpose-bred.

Boyz Unlimited
Channel 4, 9.30pm

This pacey, funny series — really a thinly disguised satire on the pop record industry — is ending tonight without the attention it has deserved. Of course it's no *Spinal Tap* but over the weeks the far from fab four and their various hangers-on have developed into fully rounded characters. Now they're in the charts at No 11 (rival band Boyz Limited are at the top) and the writer-producer Richard Osman's docusoap approach watches how they cope with such ignomony. (Nicky puts his trust in Jesus.) Luckily for them all, a tame Bosnian terrorist blows up their rivals' bus. The wrong bus — the bomb was meant for Boyz Unlimited — but at least now the field is clear to rise and rise again. **Elizabeth Cowley**

RADIO CHOICE

Friday Play: Fisher of Men
Radio 4, 9pm

This is a terrific piece of work by David Constantine, a voice play in verse and prose. The fisher is the Rev Stephen Roos Hughes and the story tells of the events that led up to his early death. The voices are those of Hughes (Ioan Meredith) and his parishioners, a dwindling band in a poor, isolated Welsh community. Most have gone over to the Methodists ("the fishers were backsliding to the old gods since the new one wasn't working"). Hughes asks God for help: "Send us a wreck or a million fish". The wreck duly arrives in the form of the *Royal Charter*, which was cast on to the North Wales rocks by the storms *of 1859. The consequences are to be far-reaching* and fatal.

Jazz Century
Radio 3, 11.30pm

This mammoth series on the history of jazz is proving a constant delight and tonight Russell Davies performs a considerable service for anyone who still thinks that Louis Armstrong was a soppy sort of fellow whose main claim to fame was singing *What A Wonderful World*. In reality of course Satchmo was a consummate trumpet player and tonight's programme concentrates on his recordings with the Hot Five in Chicago during the mid-1920s, shortly after he returned to the city following a stint with Fletcher Henderson's big band. These records were to be the making of Armstrong as a brilliant soloist and they provided *the solid foundation for his long career fronting* jazz ensembles of every size. **Peter Barnard**

RADIO 1 (BBC)

6.30am Zoe Ball **12.00** Jo Whiley **2.00pm** Mark Radcliffe **4.00** Dave Pearce **6.00** Pete Tong **9.00** The Longest Radio Show in the World — Ever! **11.00** Westwood: Radio 1 Rap Show **2.00am** Fabio and Grooverider **4.00** Emma B

RADIO 2 (BBC)

6.00am Sarah Kennedy **7.30** Wake Up to Wogan **9.30** Ken Bruce **12.00** Jimmy Young **2.00pm** Ed Stewart **5.05** Des Lynam **7.00** Morley at the Musicals (6/6) **7.30** Friday Night is Music Night. From the Derngate Theatre, Northampton **9.15** Single and Single. By John le Carré (3/8) **9.30** Listen to the Band **10.00** David Jacobs **10.30** Sheridan Morley **11.45** The People's Psalms **12.00** Lynn Parsons **4.00am** Lata Sharma

RADIO 5 LIVE (BBC)

5.00am Morning Reports **6.00** Breakfast **9.00** Nicky Campbell **12.00** The Midday News with Allan Robb **1.00pm** Ruscoe and Co **4.00** Drive with Peter Allen and Jane Garvey **7.00** News Extra **7.30** Alan Green's Sportsnight. Studio guests discuss the week's sporting issues. Followed by live second-half commentary on Bristol Rovers v Fulham **10.00** Late Night Live **1.00am** Up All Night

TALK RADIO

6.00am The Big Boys Breakfast **9.00** Scott Chisholm & Sally James **12.00** Motoring **1.00** Anna Raeburn **3.00** OK! to Talk **5.00** The Sports Zone **8.00** Nicky Horne's Access all Areas **10.00** Dave Barrett **1.00am** Mike Dickin

VIRGIN

6.30am Chris Evans **9.30** Russ Williams **1.00pm** Nick Abbot **4.00** Harriet Scott **7.00** Wheels of Steel **11.00** Janey Lee Grace **2.00am** Steve Power

BBC WORLD SERVICE

5.00am The World Today **7.00** World News **7.15** Outlook **7.55** My Century **8.00** World News **8.05** Westway **8.20** Off the Shelf Letters From My Windmill **8.35** Science in Action **9.00** World News **9.05** The Art of Translating **9.20** John Peel **9.50** Sports Round-Up **10.00** Newsdesk **10.30** Britain Today **10.45** Your Questions Of Faith **11.00** Newsdesk **11.30** Focus on Faith **12.00** World News **12.05pm** Outlook **12.45** Sports Round-Up **1.00** Newshour **2.00** World News **2.05** Science in Action **2.30** Best on Record **3.00** World News **3.05** Football Extra **3.15** Performance **3.30** The Vintage Chart Show **4.00** World News **4.15** Insight **4.30** Multitrack: Alternative **5.00** Europe Today **5.30** World Business Report **5.45** Sports Round-Up **6.00** World News **6.15** Britain Today **6.30** Focus on Faith **7.00** World News **7.05** Science in Action **7.30** Your Question Of Faith **7.45** Off the Shelf: Letters From My Windmill **8.00** Newshour **9.00** World News **9.05** World Business Report **9.20** Britain Today **9.30** Best on Record **10.00** World News **10.15** Sports Round-Up **10.30** Multitrack: Alternative **11.00** World News **11.05** Outlook **11.45** Insight **12.00** The World Today **12.30am** Science in Action **12.55** My Century **1.00** The World Today **1.30** Meridian Books **2.00** The World Today **2.30** People and Politics **3.00** The World Today **3.20** Sports Round-Up **3.30** World Business Report **3.45** Insight **4.00** The World Today **4.30** Weekend

CLASSIC FM

6.00am Nick Bailey's Easter Breakfast. Music to get the day off to a fine start **8.00** Henry Kelly. The Hall of Fame Hour and Classic Masterpiece **12.00** Lunchtime Requests. Jane Jones plays favourite music **2.00pm** Concerto. Delius (Violin Concerto) **3.00** Jamie Crick. Continuous Classics, plus sport updates and travel news **6.30** Newsnight. Top stories and interviews with guests from the arts world **7.00** Smooth Classics at Seven. John Brunning introduces classic sounds **9.00** *Evening Concert.* Debbie Wiseman (Conversation for Orchestra); Richard Rodney Bennett (Partita); David Matthews (Burnham Wick); Beethoven (Overture, Coriolan Symphony No 8); Richard Strauss (Horn Concerto No 2) **11.00** Mann at Night. Music through the small hours **2.00am** Concerto. Delius (Violin Concerto) (r) **3.00** Mark Griffiths. The Early Breakfast Show

RADIO 3

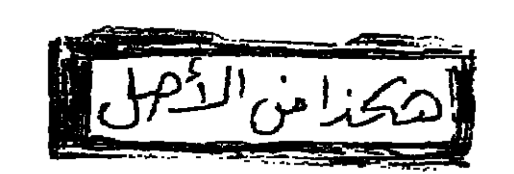
6.00am On Air Petroc Trelawny announces the winner *of a new competition in Prague for young* musicians
9.00 Masterworks with Peter Hobday. Geminiani, after Corelli (Concerto grosso in D minor (La folia); Brahms (Prelude and Fugue in G *minor*); Stravinsky (Jeu de cartes); Tartini, arr Kreisler (Variations on a Theme of Corelli); Beethoven (Symphony No 7 in A)
10.30 Artist of the Week: Kyung-Wha Chung
11.00 Sound Stories: Indian Summers Donald Macleod remembers the later years of Ralph *Vaughan Williams*
12.00 Composer of the Week: Delius
1.00pm The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert Paul Barritt, violin, Catherine Edwards, piano. Elgar (Violin Sonata in E *minor*, Op 82); Walton (Toccata); Albert Sammons (Bagatelle, Op 3; Reve d'enfant, Op 10; Dance caprice, Op 15; Petite chanson) (r)
2.00 The BBC Orchestras Ulster Orchestra under Niklas Willen, Hirokami Jun'ichi and Kenneth Montgomery, Mark Kaplan, violin. Music includes Puccini (Preludio *Sinfonico*); Respighi (Suite: The *Birds); Menotti (Violin Concerto); Sibelius* (Lemminkainen Suite)
4.00 Music Restored Lucie Skeaping introduces a Spanish edition featuring songs and guitar music by Fernando Sor and *Dionisio Aguardo (r)*
4.45 Music Machine Verity Sharp looks at small-scale instruments (r)
5.00 In Tune Sean Rafferty is joined by Thomas Hampson to discuss famous Italian duets in the operatic repertoire for baritone and bass
7.30 Performance on 3 Live from St David's Hall, Cardiff. BBC National Orchestra of Wales under Nicholas Kraemer, with Catherine Bott and Rachel Elliott, sopranos, Robin Blaze, countertenor, Andrew Murgatroyed, tenor, Matthew Hargreaves, baritone, BBC National Chorus of Wales. Handel (Water Music: Suite No 2; Silete Venti; Concerto a due cori No 1 in B flat) **8.25** Handel in the Strand, Vivaldi on the Phone. Mark Russell takes a *quizzical look at the history of* Baroque music **8.45** Concert, part two. Handel (Dixit Dominus)
9.40 Postscript: Radio Poems — Marfan by Peter Reading (5/5)
10.00 Here and Now Verity Sharp presents *The Opening of the Mouth*, a major new work by Richard Barrett for voices, instruments and electronics
11.30 Jazz Century (Sounding the Century) Presented by Russell Davies. See Choice (r)
12.00 Composer of the Week: Tchaikovsky (r)
1.00am Through the Night 1.00 Gluck (Paride ed Elena). Roberta Alexander, soprano, Claron McFadden, soprano **3.15** Schubert (Overture in the Italian Style; Symphony No 9 in C) **4.20** Bach (Cantata No 21) **5.05** Schumman (Fairy Tales, Op 132) **5.30** Giovanni Paolo Cima (La pace) **5.35** C.P.E. Bach (Concerto in F for two harpsichords)

RADIO 4

5.30am World News 5.35 Shipping Forecast
5.40 Inshore Forecast 5.45 Prayer for the Day
5.47 Farming Today with Rachel Morgan
6.00 Today with John Humphrys and Sue MacGregor
8.35 (LW) Yesterday in Parliament Political news
9.00 Desert Island Discs The Australian conductor Charles Mackerras reflects on his career (r)
9.45 (FM) Serial: The Pleasures of the Table Anna Massey reads extracts from *Honey from a Weed* by Patience Gray
9.45 (LW) An Act of Worship
10.00 Woman's Hour with Jenni Murray
11.00 Sharks and Seagulls: A Summer With Sussex In the first of two programmes, David Stafford follows the efforts of the new regime at Sussex County Cricket Club to overturn more than a century of underachievement (1/2) (r)
11.30 Sunny Side Up The Glee Boys enter the last barbershop heats before the grand finale in Harrogate (5/6)
12.00 (LW) News Headlines; Shipping Forecast
12.00 (FM) News 12.04pm You and Yours Consumer issues and public service reports, presented by Liz Barclay and John Waite
1.00 The World at One with Nick Clarke
1.30 Puzzle Panel Chris Maslanka presents riddles and brain-teasers
2.00 The Archers Yesterday's edition (r)
2.15 Afternoon Play: Family Affair A woman finds it hard to accept her new love's children — and their mother. Paul Bown and Lesley Nightingale star in Jayne Hollinson's tale (r)
3.00 Changing Places Howard Stableford explores the creative use of natural resources at Earth Balance, Northumberland, and in Sandford, Devon. Last in series
3.30 Shorelines Strangford Lough, Northern Ireland, headquarters of the UK's mud-rescue coastguard
3.45 This Sceptred Isle Part 50 of the *history of* Britain, narrated by Anna Massey (r)
4.00 Bookclub James Naughtie and guests talk to William Boyd about *Brazzaville Beach*, his award-winning novel (r)
4.30 The Message Alex Brodie and his guests discuss current media trends
5.00 PM with Nigel Wrench
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 The Sunday Format John Morton's comedy about the stories generated by a fictional weekend newspaper. Starring Rebecca Front, Simon Greenall and Tony Gardner. Last in series (4/4)
7.00 The Archers Ambridge celebrates Red Nose Day
7.15 Front Row Live arts programme
7.45 The Cry of the Bittern Environmental drama, by Tim Jackson. Broadcast earlier as part of *Woman's Hour* (20/30) (r)
8.00 Any Questions? Audience members from Thatcham in Berkshire address panellists including John Redwood, Glenys Kinnock and Lord Jenkins. Chaired by Jonathan Dimbleby
8.45 Letter from America by Alistair Cooke
9.00 The Friday Play: Fisher of Men David Constantine's tale. See Choice
10.00 The World Tonight Robin Lustig presents
10.45 Book at Bedtime: Ernest Hemingway Centenary — The Sun Also Rises The final part of Hemingway's famous novel
11.00 Late Night on 4: Late Tackle Eleanor Oldroyd chairs the sporting magazine
11.30 (LW) Today in Parliament Political update
11.30 (FM) Sport in the Movies Part one. Pat Butcher investigates the history of sport on film (1/2)
12.00 News 12.30am The Late Book: Golf Dreams The American novelist John Updike recalls his passion for golf. Last in series
12.48 Shipping Forecast 1.00 As World Service

FREQUENCY GUIDE. RADIO 1. FM 97.6-99.8. **RADIO 2.** FM 88.0-90.2. **RADIO 3.** FM 90.2-92.4. **RADIO 4.** FM 92.4-94.6; LW 198; MW 720. **RADIO 5 LIVE.** MW 693, 909. **WORLD SERVICE.** MW 648; LW 198 (12.45-5.55am). **CLASSIC FM.** FM 100-102. **VIRGIN RADIO.** FM 105.8; MW 1197, 1215. **TALK RADIO.** MW 1053, 1089.

Television and radio listings compiled by Perry Cleveland-Peck, Ian Hughes, Gillian Maxey, Jane Gregory and Barry O'Keefe



My space station is bigger than yours

REVIEW



Paul Hoggart

When I were a lad, we made do wi' thruppenny cap-guns and rifles made of us mothers' broom-'andles. But we were 'appy! Little lads nowadays; they're not content wi'out they've got a four-foot Super-Lasertronic-Space-Soaker wi' nuclear explosion sound-effects, which can floor an old-age-pensioner at 50 yards. Or a $96 billion International Space Station.

New Star in Orbit, last night's edition of *Horizon* (BBC2), was an awe-inspiring story. Never in the field of human toy collection has so much been paid by so many to so few. Well not so few, actually: the United States space station conceptualisation and hypothetical design industry supports a large, thriving community of boffins and research outfits at the American public's expense.

It was clear immediately that Ed Harriman and Lara Hannay, the producers, were a trifle sceptical about the validity of this undertaking, and their documentary presented the case for the prosecution very effectively. I suppose, for the sake of balance, we ought to see a defence of the project, but I doubt it would be as convincing.

We have known since the dawn of "the space race", apparently, that unmanned probes are vastly more effective research tools than manned expeditions and that they are a minute fraction as expensive. You can get a probe a billion miles past Saturn, sending back full colour snaps for the amount it costs to design a set of astronaut's space-pants. Or something like that.

During the Cold War, the problem was always keeping ahead of the Soviet Union. The United States discovered, like Nazi Germany before it, that the Russians had a knack of stealing a march on you, even with vastly inferior resources. An ingenious but simple solution will often do the trick at half the time and cost of a super-sophisticated, high-tech one.

It was bad enough that they got the first man into space; they had to go and build the first space station, too. It was this, apparently, that got President Reagan going, and the boys from Nasa were invited to present him with a series of models of spaceships. There were sceptics in the US Treasury from the outset, but once Nasa got the toy-box out and Ronnie got to pick the models up, their cause was lost.

The original pitch was for America's bigger, better space station to cost $8 billion and take ten years to complete. Agencies usually make "low-ball" estimates, we were reminded, but this must take some kind of record. Fifteen years later the figure has been revised to $96 billion over 21 years, and they have only just launched the first component into space. We are still six years short of target completion, so, according to my thumbnail calculation, the final cost could rise even further to about $163,000 trillion, roughly. Even at today's estimate you could teach a lot of semi-literate Americans to spell for such sums. Or wipe out starvation in several developing countries.

The purpose of the project has also kept shifting with the political climate. During the Cold War it was to be a cutting-edge research and development facility with commercial, medical and doubtless military spin-offs. Then it was to be a launchpad for an enormously difficult and completely pointless manned flight to Mars.

Nowadays it's all about international peace and harmony, largely because the Americans discovered that the Russians were way ahead on recycling sweat and urine, and they needed to half-inch all that primitive but practical technology. The proposed station is now so big that it could eliminate the benefit of a low-gravity environment for medical experiments, and even those are dubious it seems.

It will be the most expensive object in human history. "This thing just stands in the way," said a cynical scientist, bitter at the diversion of revenue from genuinely useful research. But nobody, just nobody, will have a bigger toy.

Wheeler Dealers (BBC2) brought us down to earth with a bump. This quirky little programme has pitted two teams of salespersons against each other on a series of money-making challenges. The publicity describes them as would-be "Arfur Daleys", after the dodgy entrepreneur in *Minder*. To emphasise this point the teams were given Reliant three-wheelers, just like Del Boy Trotter in *Only Fools And Horses*. Pardon?

Last week they had to organise a night at a club. Simon, a would-be City whiz-kid with a public school-effect voice, who kept banging on about the need to be ruthless and amoral in business and ignoring all advice because it wasn't ruthless enough, made about 12p. He looked like a right merchant banker.

The teams did a bit better this week, mainly by selling pants. My nephew and his friends used to use the word "pants" as a term of derision. The two teams had to flog stuff on market stalls. Well, pants went down really well at Walthamstow and Kempton Park, perhaps because they were "genuine" Calvin Kleins at a fiver for a pack of three. The series at least taught us that successful hustling is hard work. Otherwise, I'm sorry to say, it was rather "pants".

So, sadly are British heavyweight boxers, when challenging for the world title. Lee Evans — *Kings of the Ring* (Channel 4) was a highly entertaining Cook's tour of these "game", "plucky", "spunky", bulldog-spirited chaps getting knocked flat by Americans, or remaining standing with their faces drenched in ketchup. Only Joe Bugner avoided these fates, bravely dancing backwards for 15 rounds. Lennox Lewis has a North American accent, so on Saturday who knows? But it's not the winning that counts, is it? It's how you wear those pants!

BBC1

6.00am Business Breakfast (96386)
7.00 Breakfast News (T) (32015)
9.00 Kilroy (T) (2651831)
9.45 Wipeout (5393396)
10.10 The Vanessa Show (T) (7540270)
10.55 News; Weather (T) (3100657)
11.00 Change That (3110034)
11.25 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (T) (3180893)
11.55 News; Weather (T) (7068831)
12.00 Call My Bluff (82134)
12.30pm Top Tip Challenge (r) (4641589)
12.55 The Weather Show (T) (53785589)
1.00 One O'Clock News (T) (35102)
1.30 Regional News; Weather (59607164)
1.40 Neighbours The truth about Bianca emerges (T) (35747522)
2.05 Ironside A party host is the victim of a murder attempt. Starring Raymond Burr and Don Galloway (r) (5968367)
2.55 Through the Keyhole (r) (T) (3213742)
3.25 Children's BBC: Playdays (6504164) **3.45** Spider (5168763) **3.50** Smart on the Road (9880676) **4.05** Red Nose Day 1999 (4199305)
5.35 Neighbours (r) (T) (139270)
6.00 Six O'Clock News; Weather (T) (947)
6.30 Regional News Magazine (299)
7.00 CHOICE **Comic Relief** The fun starts here as Lenny Henry and Denise Van Outen kick off a mammoth seven hours of fundraising (T) (709725)



Zoe Ball co-hosts the fundraising festivities (7.45pm)

7.45 Johnny and Zoe Johnny Vaughan and Zoe Ball introduce Griff Rhys Jones' record-breaking gunge challenge and a unique episode of *Doctor Who* starring Rowan Atkinson (T) (658893)
8.30 French and Saunders Dawn and Jennifer take over the reins as Boyzone perform the Comic Relief single *When the Going Gets Tough*, and Peter Snow announces the total so far (T) (7251)
9.00 Nine O'Clock News; Regional News; Weather (T) (5015)
9.30 French and Saunders Ride Again A special episode of *Hetty Wainthropp Investigates* featuring Victoria Wood and the cast of *Coronation Street* (T) (25164)
10.00 Jack, Jonathan and Julian Messrs Dee, Ross and Clary continue the comic mayhem (T) (961251)
10.45 Davina Live with Lenny With guests Reeves and Mortimer and Graham Norton (T) (845909)
11.30 TFI Comic Relief With Chris Evans, Kathy Burke and Gazza (T) (61725)
12.30am Blast from the Past with Ben Elton A look at some of the highlights of previous Comic Reliefs (T) (65042)
1.00 Carry On Loving (1970) FILM Saucy comedy about an unconventional marriage agency run by seedy Sid James, aided and abetted by Hattie Jacques. Directed by Gerald Thomas (T) (8753955)
2.25 Weather (9776503)
2.30 BBC News 24 (8827619)

BBC2

7.00am Children's BBC Breakfast Show: Pingu (7579812) **7.05** Teletubbies (2833152) **7.30** Snorks (8431725) **7.50** Short Change (3549096) **8.18** Rewind (3980367) **8.20** Taz-Mania (5137386) **8.40** Polka Dot Shorts (1185034) **8.50** Pingu (1181218) **9.00** Storytime (7703034) **9.10** See You, See Me (4435909) **9.30** Numbertime (8824015) **9.45** Come Outside (8812270) **10.00** Teletubbies (96725) **10.30** Megamaths (1673454) **10.50** Look & Read (1693218) **11.10** Landmarks (3386928) **11.30** English File (4522) **12.00** Scene (82116) **12.30pm** Working Lunch (36270) **1.00** Johnson and Friends (68004164)
1.10 War Walks The British attack on Normandy (r) (T) (41835560)
1.40 Hart-Davis on History (35768015)
2.10 Awash with Colour (56528164)
2.40 News; Weather (T) (3372454)
2.45 Match of Their Day (T) (4759928)
3.25 News; Weather (T) (4892980)
3.30 The Village (r) (9549812)
3.55 Kaye Advice show (9557831)
4.25 Ready, Steady, Cook (T) (6243676)
4.55 Esther (T) (5228657)
5.30 Today's the Day (T) (676)
6.00 The Simpsons (r) (T) (275034)
6.25 Robot Wars: Grudge Match Special Craig Charles presents (T) (250725)
6.55 Top of the Pops Gail Porter introduces Boyzone; Cher; Vengaboys; Skunk Anansie; Stereophonics; Whitney Houston; and Blur (T) (342454)
7.30 Country House The Tavistocks' plan for a new golf course on the estate causes tension with the villagers (T) (725)
8.00 CHOICE **Trust Me, I'm a Doctor** Dr Phil Hammond takes a closer look at the bowel (T) (6386)
8.30 Gardeners' World Stephen Lacey meets the Hollywood garden designer Jay Griffiths (T) (5893)
9.00 Alan Partridge Live! As BBC1 breaks for the news, the hapless broadcaster takes over (T) (3657)
9.28 Welcome to Las Vegas (T) (852251)
9.30 Timewatch Investigation into the Roman campaign in Dacia (r) (T) (846218)
10.20 Several Careful Owners The Messerschmitt bubble car (r) (911763)
10.30 Newsnight (T) (848096)
11.15 Births, Marriages and Deaths Terry finds consolation (3/4) (r) (T) (479201)



Jeanne Moreau stars in François Truffaut's classic drama (12.10am)

12.10am Jules et Jim (1961) FILM François Truffaut's romantic drama following the lives of an Austrian and a Frenchman who both fall for the same girl. Jeanne Moreau stars (597232)
1.50 Later with Jools Holland Includes music by Simply Red and Smashing Pumpkins (r) (2111619)
2.55 Weather (5418435)
3.00 BBC Learning Zone: GCSE Bitesize Revision: Spanish (16684) **5.00** Close

HTV

5.30am ITV Morning News (16638)
6.00 GMTV (5822589)
9.25 Trisha (T) (8054218)
10.30 This Morning (T) (44669812)
12.15pm HTV News (T) (4157454)
12.30 ITV Lunchtime News (T) (4636657)
12.54 HTV Crimestoppers (53771386)
12.55 Getaways (r) (T) (9063367)
1.30 Home and Away Geraldine steals the show (T) (35776034)
1.55 The Jerry Springer Show (T) (9585198)
2.40 Wheel of Fortune (T) (7813706)
3.10 ITV News Headlines (T) (4891251)
3.15 HTV News (T) (4890522)
3.20 CITV: Mopatop's Shop (4811015) **3.30** Timbuctoo (5165676) **3.35** Animal Stories (9870299) **3.45** Giggly Bitz! (9883763) **4.00** Pump It Up (6342947) **4.35** Comin' Atcha (3106763)
5.00 Home and Away Geraldine steals the show (r) (T) (4928)
5.30 Sportsweek Sport highlights (102)
5.58 HTV Weather (980454)
6.00 HTV News (T) (265)
6.30 ITV Evening News; Weather (T) (367)
7.00 Bruce Forsyth's Play Your Cards Right Game show (8/16) (T) (4164)



Fiona Allen stars as Julia Stone, Mike Baldwin's new rep (7.30pm)

7.30 Coronation Street Leanne gets proof that she's pregnant (T) (251)
8.00 Carol Vorderman's Better Homes Final edition of the home improvement series, with Carol and her team making DIY dreams come true for neighbours in Newbury, converting a loft and installing a self-contained flat (10/10) (T) (3812)
8.30 You've Been Framed! Compilation of video howlers (r) (T) (2947)
9.00 Who Wants To Be a Millionaire? Ultimate big-prize game show (T) (1947)
10.00 Infidelity The aftermath of illicit affairs. Last in series (3/3) (T) (4034)
11.00 ITV Nightly News; Weather (T) (882560)
11.20 HTV News and Weather (T) (751251)
11.30 Wonderful You New drama series starring Greg Wise and Richard Lumsden (1/7) (r) (T) (56893)
12.30am ITV at the Reading Festival Music including performances by Symposium and the Bluetones (r) (92348)
1.30 Leahy in Concert The Celtic band perform (r) (2951955)
2.05 Club@vision Dance scene (2047868)
2.50 The Haunted Fishtank The irreverent TV review with Ed Hall (r) (8768023)
3.20 Short Story Cinema A battered housewife tries to escape her abusive husband by enrolling in evening classes, but her first lesson soon turns into a nightmare. Mariangela Pino stars (12216226)
3.50 Trisha Shown earlier (r) (T) (9242752)
4.50 ITV Nightscreen Behind the scenes of ITV programmes (43067329)
5.00 Coronation Street (r) (T) (86684)

CENTRAL

As HTV West except: **12.20pm-12.30 Central News;** Weather (T) (7395522) **12.55 Home and Away** (T) (4644676) **1.25 The Jerry Springer Show** (T) (4209270) **2.10-2.40 Wish You Were Here?** (r) (T) (56555218) **3.15-3.20 Central News** (T) (4890522) **5.30 Surprise Gardeners** (1/10) (102) **6.00-6.30 Central News at Six;** Weather (T) (265) **11.20-11.30 Central News;** Weather (T) (751251) **11.30 Late Tackle** (9/11) (541541) **12.35am FILM: The Lookalike** (T) (387077) **2.15 Club@vision** (2036752) **3.00 Box Office America** (r) (12205110) **3.25 The Haunted Fishtank** (r) (12215597) **3.55 Central Jobfinder '99** (T) (5577313) **5.20-5.30 Asian Eye** (3442706)

WESTCOUNTRY

As HTV West except: **12.15pm-12.27 Westcountry News;** Weather (T) (4157454) **12.27-12.30 Small Talk, Big Talk** (7303541) **12.55-1.25 Westcountry Lunchtime Live** (T) (4644676) **1.25 The Jerry Springer Show** (T) (4209270) **2.10-2.40 Home and Away** (T) (56555218) **3.15-3.20 Westcountry News;** Weather (T) (4890522) **4.58-5.00 Birthday People** (7906473) **5.30 Westcountry Weekend** (102) **6.00-6.30 Westcountry Live;** Weather (T) (265) **11.20-11.30 Westcountry News;** Weather (T) (751251) **11.30-1.30 FILM: Stir Crazy** (30218)

MERIDIAN

As HTV West except: **12.15pm-12.30 Meridian News;** Weather (4157454) **12.55-1.30 Shortland Street** (9063367) **5.30 Streetwise** (102) **6.00-6.30 Meridian Tonight** (T) (265) **7.29-7.30 Meridian Weather** (801893) **11.20-11.30 Meridian News;** Weather (T) (751251) **5.00am-5.30 Freescreen** (T) (86684)

ANGLIA

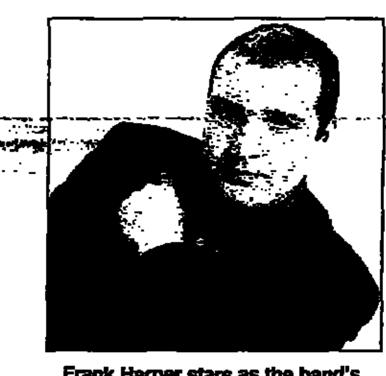
As HTV West except: **12.19pm Anglia Air Watch** (7314657) **12.20-12.30 Anglia News and Weather** (7395522) **12.55-1.30 Shortland Street** (9063367) **5.30-6.00 Off the Beaten Track** (7/10) (T) (102) **6.00-6.30 Anglia News** (T) (265) **11.19 Anglia Air Watch** (308218) **11.20-11.30 Anglia News and Weather** (T) (751251)

S4C

Starts: **5.55am Sesame Street** (r) (20298034) **7.00 The Big Breakfast** (67980893) **9.00 Ysgolion:** Off Limits (99277386) **9.25 Schools at Work** (29818218) **9.30 Eureka** (74178589) **9.45 Stop, Look, Listen** (74166744) **10.00 The Complete Cosmos** (14113015) **10.10 TVM** (91905980) **10.25 Iaith ar Daith** (91924015) **10.45 Enter the Maths Zone** (96214299) **11.00 The Technology Programme** (15077560) **11.15 Pa Newydd?** (15067183) **11.30 Powerhouse** (T) (68332473) **12.00 Home Improvement** (T) (97111541) **12.30pm Sesame Street** (T) (26946386) **1.00 Planed Plant** (T) (67983980) **1.30 Travelog Treks** (T) (54863251) **1.40 FILM: Angels One Five** (T) (79755473) **3.30 Collectors' Lot** (T) (67216164) **4.00 Fifteen-to-One** (T) (67235299) **4.30 Dishes** (T) (67224183) **5.00 Planed Plant** (90216909) **5.30 Countdown** (T) (67248763) **6.00 Newyddion 6** (T) (93564096) **6.10 Heno** (T) (86054299) **7.00 Pobol y Cwm** (T) (90229473) **7.30 Newyddion** (T) (67225812) **8.00 Cefn Gwlad** (T) (90205893) **8.30 Y Clwb Rygbi** (T) (90224928) **9.00 Pawb a'i Farn** (37476034) **10.00 Brookside** (T) (72781386) **10.35 Frasier** (T) (35886589) **11.05 So Graham Norton** (83873473) **11.45 TFI Friday** (41146218) **12.45am Celebrity Deathmatch** (T) (91302435) **1.35 The RuPaul Show** (T) (39786459) **2.10 Late Toon: Planet Apathy** (95553936) **2.15 The Mod Squad** (90608226) **3.15 Vids** (r) (51851665) **3.45 FILM: The Face of Fu Manchu** (31779503) **5.25 Diwedd**

CHANNEL 4

5.55am Sesame Street (4389386)
7.00 The Big Breakfast (25725)
9.00 Schools: Off Limits (8920819) **9.25** Schools at Work (8972928) **9.30** Eureka (8819183) **9.45** Stop, Look, Listen (8814638) **10.00** The Complete Cosmos (5135454) **10.10** TVM (9012928) **10.25** 1798 and After (9024763) **10.45** Enter the Maths Zone (9354367) **11.00** The Technology Programme (3228096) **11.15** Stage One (3241947)
11.30 Powerhouse (T) (9218)
12.00 Sesame Street (T) (96164)
12.30pm Bewitched (r) (T) (38638)
1.00 Pet Rescue (T) (28812)
1.30 Australia Wild (r) (T) (3911676)
2.05 Edge of Eternity (1959) FILM A sheriff links three unsolved murders to an argument over the ownership of a disused gold mine. Thriller, starring Cornel Wilde. Directed by Don Siegel (T) (6956386)
3.30 Collectors' Lot (T) (473)
4.00 Fifteen-to-One (T) (980)
4.30 Countdown (T) (3105034)
4.55 Ricki Lake (T) (5213725)
5.30 Pet Rescue (T) (744)
6.00 TFI Friday Guests Andy Williams and James Nesbitt join Chris Evans and music comes from Echo and the Bunnymen and Travis (T) (46657)
7.00 Channel 4 News (T) (354299)
7.55 The Outlaw Time is running out for Michael (T) (238183)
8.00 CHOICE **Return to the Lost Gardens of Heligan** A look ahead to the future of Heligan (T) (1454)
8.30 Brookside Ryan loses his cool, while Mother's Day brings cold comfort for Niamh and Jackie (T) (7779)
9.00 Friends Phoebe's identical twin pays a visit, leading to multiple mishaps and misunderstandings (r) (T) (8725)



Frank Harper stars as the band's manager Nigel Gacey (9.30pm)

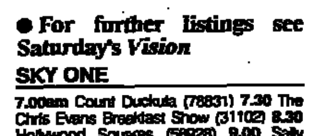
9.30 CHOICE **Boyz Unlimited** Things go from bad to worse for the band as Nicky seeks solace in the Bible, while Gareth turns to Elton John (T) (41102)
10.00 Frasier The Seattle shrink is set up on a blind date (T) (97893)
10.30 So Graham Norton (842812)
11.10 Access All Areas A fashion shoot using disabled models (T) (522676)
11.40 Celebrity Deathmatch Fantasy fights between celebrities (973541)
12.30am 4 Later; The RuPaul Show (8322503)
1.05 Late Toon: Planet Apathy (1271619)
1.10 The Mod Squad A dying girl goes on the run and the gang fear she may set off a meningitis epidemic (3120503)
2.10 Vids Offbeat video review (r) (2161508)
2.40 The Face of Fu Manchu (1965) FILM Christopher Lee debuts as the nefarious villain, who tries to take over the London underworld with an attack on an English village. Directed by Don Sharp (285752)
4.20 Prometheus and Domingo (3686868)

CHANNEL 5

6.00am 5 News and Sport (3630294)
7.00 WideWorld Part 16 Continuing education in the workplace (r) (T) (8096947)
7.30 Milkshake! (2511473)
7.35 Wimzie's House (r) (4590102)
8.00 Havakazoo (r) (2713725)
8.30 Dappledown Farm (r) (2712096)
9.00 Nancy Lam (r) (T) (5517003)
9.25 Russell Grant's Postcards (4372744)
9.30 The Oprah Winfrey Show (6887283)
10.20 Sunset Beach Gregory reveals his secret to Annie (T) (3569386)
11.10 Leeza (r) (7016675)
12.00 5 News at Noon (T) (2716812)
12.30pm Family Affairs Pete has a nasty shock (r) (T); 5 News Update (1194034)
1.00 The Bold and the Beautiful A fashion critic praises Sally's show (T) (8095218)
1.30 The Roseanne Show Entertainment and chat with the outspoken comedian; 5 News Update (1193305)
2.00 100 Per Cent Gold (9072034)
2.30 Good Afternoon (1670522)
3.30 Bridesmaids (TVM 1989) FILM Drama charting the laughter and tears of four friends reunited at a wedding for the first time in 20 years. Shelley Hack and Sela Ward star. Lila Garrett directs (4812473)
5.10 Sunset Beach (r) (T) (8314251)
6.00 100 Per Cent Quiz (T) (2316015)
6.30 Family Affairs Pete gets his comeuppance (T) (2307367)
7.00 5 News; Weather Round-up of the day's stories (T) (9043522)
7.30 Natural Passions The work of the wildlife vet David Cooper, who is responsible for transferring rhinos, kudu and lions to reserves throughout Africa (T); 5 News Update (2396251)
8.00 Cops in the Sky How helicopters enable the aerial police to catch more than 100,000 criminals every year; 5 News Update (8407541)
9.00 Murder in New Hampshire (1991) FILM True-life crime drama about a high-school teacher who grows bored with her marriage and manipulates a love-struck student into killing her husband. Starring Helen Hunt, Chad Allen, Ken Howard and Howard Hesseman. Directed by Joyce Chopra (T); 5 News Update (81171589)
10.50 Poltergeist: The Legacy Nick picks up a mysterious hitch-hiker (r) (T) (4910541)
11.45 Delta of Venus (1994) FILM An erotic novelist meets an American author who helps her fantasy tales come true. Adult drama, starring Audi England. Directed by Zalman King (6020096)
1.40am Near Mrs (1990) FILM Premiere Fast-paced farce, with Judge Reinhold as a bigamous executive working on a top-secret Pentagon project. Co-starring Casey Siemaszko. Directed by Baz Taylor (4216771)
3.20 Hey, I'm Alive (1975) FILM Fact-based adventure charting two plane crash survivors' efforts to stay alive in the frozen Yukon wilderness. Directed by Lawrence Schiller (52018787)
4.35 Russell Grant's Postcards A visit to Wimbledon (r) (38711400)
4.40 Prisoner: Cell Block H (7007874)
5.30 100 Per Cent (r) (8608481)

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SATELLITE, CABLE AND DIGITAL



● For further listings see *Saturday's Vision*

SKY ONE

7.00am Count Duckula (78831) **7.30** The Chris Evans Breakfast Show (31102) **8.30** Hollywood Squares (58928) **9.00** Sally Jessy Raphael (51725) **10.00** Oprah Winfrey (53522) **11.00** Guilty! (73386) **12.00** Jenny Jones (89763) **1.00pm** Mad About You (77102) **1.30** Jeopardy (86299) **2.00** Sally Jessy Raphael (31812) **3.00** Jenny Jones (71893) **4.00** Guilty! (90928) **5.00** Star Trek: Voyager (2657) **6.00** America's Dumbest Criminals (4299) **6.30** Friends (8251) **7.00** The Simpsons (1096) **7.30** The Simpsons (7763) **8.00** Beat the Crusher (91302) **9.00** Really Caught in the Act (21386) **10.00** Cops (53473) **10.30** Cops (39893) **11.00** Friends (91657) **11.30** Star Trek: Voyager (23164) **12.30am** The Commish (43042) **1.30** Long Play (5405969)

SKY BOX OFFICE

Sky's pay-per-view movie channels. To view any film telephone 0990 800888
SKY BOX OFFICE 1 (Transponder 51) **Firestorm (1997)**
SKY BOX OFFICE 2 (Transponder 60) **Fallen (1998)**
SKY BOX OFFICE 3 (Transponder 59) **Flubber (1997)**
SKY BOX OFFICE 4 (Transponder 58) **Double Team (1997)**

SKY PREMIER

6.00am A Change of Heart (1997) (72229) **8.00 The Wedding (1997)** (53034) **10.00 Carpool (1996)** (89396) **12.00 Burning Secret (1988)** (43657) **2.00pm A Change of Heart (1997)** (13367) **4.00 The Wedding (1997)** (6541) **6.00 Carpool (1996)** (26831) **8.00 Star Trek: First Contact (1996)** (36676) **10.00 Dante's Peak (1997)** (296980) **11.50 The Spitfire Grill (1996)** (301636) **1.50am Dead Again (1991)** (513454) **3.40 The Big Man (1990)** (91572936)

SKY MOVIEMAX

5.05am Race Against the Harvest (1987) (40026270) **7.00 Shepherd on the Rock (1994)** (69183) **9.00 Gus (1976)** (42928) **11.00 They Won't Believe Me (1947)** (19812) **1.00pm Shepherd on the Rock (1994)** (46744) **3.00 Gus (1976)** (27980) **5.00 Damnation Alley (1977)** (68305) **7.00** P: Review (6164) **7.30** UK Top 10 (2831) **8.00** Femmes Fatales: Sharon Stone (5812) **8.30** Movie Magic (4947) **9.00 187 (1997)** (39305) **11.00 Murder at 1600 (1997)** (746170) **12.50am Shadow Conspiracy (1997)** (833226) **2.35 The Silence of the Hams (1993)** (8599874) **4.00 Midnight Crossing (1988)** (274787)

SKY CINEMA

4.00pm Buck Privates (1941) (7196015) **6.00 The Desperate Hours (1955)** (2599184) **8.00 Honkytonk Man (1982)** (2501909) **10.00 The French Connection (1971)** (7813270) **11.45 French Connection II (1975)** (4809386) **1.40am The Rainbow (1988)** (1721400) **3.35 The Hound of the Baskervilles (1939)** (61835313)

FILMFOUR

6.00pm Short Attention Span (4121638) **8.00 Cabaret (1972)** (13300589) **10.10 Scanners (1980)** (9900218) **12.00 Rabid (1976)** (9598226) **1.35am Pierrot le Fou (1965)** (8059874) **3.30 French Kiss (1995)** (4547139) **6.00** Close

TNT

9.00pm WCW Nitro (28438522) **11.35** WCW Thunder (99337096) **1.15am The Fearless Vampire Killers (1967)** (91398868) **3.15 The Karate Killers (1967)** (13821400) **5.00** Close

SKY SPORTS 1

6.30am Futures in Sport **7.00** Sports Centre **7.15** Wrestling **8.15** You're On Sky Sports! **9.00** Racing News **9.30** Aerobics **10.00** Big Fight Countdown **10.30** Spanish Football **12.00** Aerobics **12.30pm** Big Fight Countdown **1.00** Live Golf **5.00** Futbol Mundial **5.30** What A Weekend **6.00** Sports Centre **7.00** Boxing: Big Fight Countdown **7.30** European Tour Golf **10.00** Sports Centre **11.00** Boxing: Big Fight Countdown **11.30** Hold the Back Page **12.30am** Sports Centre **1.30** World Wrestling Federation. Raw **3.30** Sports Centre **4.30** Boxing: Big Fight Countdown **5.00** Max Power

SKY SPORTS 2

7.00am Aerobics Oz Style **7.30** Sports Centre **7.45** Racing News **8.15** What A Weekend **8.45** Sports Centre **9.00** Fish TV. Tight Lines **10.00** US Golf **12.00** The Rugby Club **1.00pm** Ice Hockey **3.30** Boxing. Big Fight Countdown **4.00** Trans World Sport **5.00** The Rugby Club **6.00** Moto-Plus **6.30** Extreme Sailing **7.30** Live International U15's Football **9.30** Boxing. Big Fight Countdown **10.00** US Golf **12.00** Cycling **12.30pm** International U15's Football **2.30** Sports Centre **3.30** US Golf **5.30** Extreme Sailing

SKY SPORTS 3

11.30am Futures in Sport **12.00** Trans World Sport **1.00pm** Fishing: Tight Lines **2.00** Bobby Charlton's Football Scrapbook **3.30** Survival of the Fittest **4.00** Football League Review **5.00** World Sport Special **5.30** Fastrax **6.00** Cycling **6.30** Inside the Senior PGA Tour **7.00** Max Power **8.00** Rugby Union **10.00** World Wrestling Federation: Raw **12.00** Close

EUROSPORT

7.30am Golf **8.30** Ski-Jumping **10.00** Live Biathlon **11.30** Racing Line **12.00** Snowboarding **12.30pm** Live Biathlon **2.00** Tennis **4.00** Nordic Combined Skiing **5.00** Live Women's Skiing **6.00** Live Tennis **8.00** Live Women's Alpine Skiing **8.45** Live Women's Tennis **10.00** Live Tennis **11.30** Equestrianism **12.30am** Close

UK GOLD

7.00am Crossroads **7.30** Neighbours **7.55** EastEnders **8.30** The Bill **9.00** The Bill **9.30** When the Boat Comes In **10.30** Rhoda **11.00** Dallas **11.55** Neighbours **12.25pm** EastEnders **1.00** Juliet Bravo **2.00** Dallas **2.55** The Bill **3.25** The Bill **3.55** EastEnders **4.30** Rhoda **5.00** All Creatures Great and Small **6.00** Dynasty **7.00** Ever Decreasing Circles **7.40** Dad's Army **8.20** The Brittas Empire **9.00** The Thin Blue Line **9.40** Harry Enfield and Chums **10.20** Ruby Wax Meets Bill Cosby and Fran Drescher **11.00** The Bill **11.30** The Bill **12.00** Doctor Who. The Chase **1.45pm** Blake's Seven **3.00** Shopping with Screenshop

GRANADA PLUS

6.00am Within These Walls **7.00** Holding the Fort **7.30** The Odd Couple **8.00** Hallelujah **8.30** The Many Wives of Patrick **9.00** Classic Coronation Street **9.30** Emmerdale Farm **10.00** Upstairs, Downstairs **11.00** The Gentle Touch **12.00** Classic Coronation Street **12.30pm** Emmerdale Farm **1.00** The Many Wives of Patrick **1.30** Me and My Girl **2.00** Upstairs, Downstairs **3.00** The Love Boat **4.00** The Professionals **5.00** Hart to Hart **6.00** Emmerdale Farm **6.30** Classic Coronation Street **7.00** The Professionals **8.00** The Benny Hill Show **9.00** The Sweeney **10.00** The Brian Conley Show **10.30** Wheeltappers and Shunters' Social Club **11.00** Granada Men and Motors



Michael Ironside stars as a ruthless telepathic assassin in David Cronenberg's classic sci-fi horror Scanners (FilmFour, 10.10pm)

CARLTON SELECT

6.00pm What's Cooking? **5.30** Gridlock **6.00** London Bridge **6.30** Our House **7.00** Boon **8.00** Blue Heelers **9.00** Love Hurts **10.00** The Good Sex Guide **10.30** The Screen **11.00** Hill Street Blues **12.00** Grown Ups **12.30pm** Gridlock **1.00** The Last Place on Earth **2.00** Close

DISNEY CHANNEL

6.00am Gummi Bears **6.25** Classic Toons **6.35** Tale Spin **7.00** Classic Toons **7.10** Aladdin **7.35** 101 Dalmatians **8.00** Goof Troop **8.25** Classic Toons **8.45** New Adventures of Winnie the Pooh **9.00** The Adventures of Spot **9.05** Animal Shelf **9.15** Pocket Dragons **9.30** Bear in the Big Blue House **9.55** The Toothbrush Family **10.00** Bite Size **10.10** Rosie and Jim **10.30** The Big Garage **10.45** PB and J Otter **11.00** Sesame Street **12.00** The Adventures of Spot **12.05pm** Animal Shelf **12.15** Pocket Dragons **12.30** Bear in the Big Blue House **12.55** The Toothbrush Family **1.00** Bite Size **1.10** Rosie and Jim **1.30** The Big Garage **1.45** PB and J Otter **2.00** New Adventures of Winnie the Pooh **2.30** Quack Pack **3.00** The Little Mermaid **3.30** Art Attack **4.00** 101 Dalmatians **4.30** Hercules The TV Show **5.00** Recess **5.15** Pepper Ann **5.30** Smart Guy **6.00** Teen Angel **6.30** Boy Meets World **7.00** FILM: Brink! (TVM 1998) **8.30** Honey, I Shrunk the Kids: TV Show **9.15** Double Dinosaurs **10.00** Home Improvement **10.30** The Wonder Years **11.00** Touched by an Angel **12.00** Close

FOX KIDS NETWORK

6.00am Adventures of Dodo **6.05** Power Rangers Turbo **6.30** Power Rangers Turbo **6.55** Spiderman **7.20** Oggy and the Cockroaches **7.30** Donkey Kong Country **8.00** Hero Turtles. The Next Mutation **8.25** The Incredible Hulk **8.50** Iron Man **9.15** Fantastic Four **9.40** X-Men **10.05** Casper **10.30** Oggy and the Cockroaches **10.55** Eek!Stravaganza **11.05** Bobby's World **11.30** Life with Louie **11.55** Home to Rent **12.05pm** Dennis and Gnasher **12.30** Donkey Kong Country **1.00** Mowgli: The New Adventures of Jungle Book. **1.25** Ace Ventura **1.55** The Incredible Hulk **2.20** Iron Man **2.45** Fantastic Four **3.10** X-Men **3.30** Fox Kids X-Press **3.35** Spiderman **4.00** Goosebumps **4.25** Hero Turtles. The Next Mutation **4.50** Casper **5.00** Dennis and Gnasher **5.30** Ace Ventura **6.00** Donkey Kong Country **6.30** Eek!Stravaganza **6.55** Oggy and the Cockroaches **7.00** Close

NICKELODEON

7.00 CatDog **7.30** Rugrats **8.00** The Wild Thornberrys **8.30** Arthur **9.00** Children's BBC **10.00** Wimzie's House **10.30** Papa Beaver Stories **11.00** The Magic School Bus **11.30** PB Bear/Budgie the Little Helicopter/Animal Antics/Family Ness **12.00** Rugrats **12.30pm** Blue's Clues **1.00** Bananas in Pyjamas **1.30** Little Bear Stories **2.00** Paddington Bear/Lizzie's Library/Portland Bill/Mr Men **2.30** Children's BBC **3.00** Children's BBC **3.30** Doug **4.00** Three Friends and Jerry **4.30** Rugrats **5.00** Sister Sister **5.30** Kenan and Kel **6.00** Renford Rejects **6.30** Moesha **7.00** Close

BRAVO

6.00pm Martial Law **9.00** Extreme Championship Wrestling **9.30** Cops **10.00** The Late Lounge **10.30** Erotic Confessions **11.00** FILM: The Happy Hooker Goes to Hollywood (1979) **1.00am** Erotic Confessions **1.30** The Late Lounge **2.00** Martial Law **3.00** FILM: National Lampoon's Movie Madness (1981) **5.00** Extreme Championship Wrestling **5.30** Cops **6.00** Close

PARAMOUNT COMEDY

7.00pm Jenny **7.30** Grace Under Fire **8.00** Ellen **8.30** Spin City **9.00** Drop the Dead Donkey **9.30** Whose Line is it Anyway? **10.00** FILM: Jabberwocky (1977) **12.00** Late Night with David Letterman **1.00pm** Taxi **1.30** Frontline **2.00** Dr Katz **2.30** Tibs and Fibs **3.00** Nightstand **3.30** Abbott and Costello **4.00** Close

THE SCI-FI CHANNEL

SATELLITE: 6pm-MIDNIGHT ONLY

7.30am Bloomberg Information Television **8.00** Sightings **9.00** Battlestar Galactica **10.00** Quantum Leap **11.00** Dark Shadows **11.30** The Ray Bradbury Theatre **12.00** The Twilight Zone **1.00pm** Tales of the Unexpected **1.30** Tales of the Unexpected **2.00** Amazing Stories **2.30** Mysteries, Magic and Miracles **3.00** Battlestar Galactica **4.00** The Incredible Hulk **5.00** Sightings **6.00** The Ray Bradbury Theatre **6.30** New Alfred Hitchcock **7.00** Quantum Leap **8.00** Amazing Stories **8.30** Highlander: The Raven **9.30** The Hunger **10.00** FILM: Demon House (1996) **11.35** Sci-Focus Special **12.00** FILM: Megazone 23 **1.45am** Sci-Focus Special **2.00** The Guyver **2.30** 100 Years of Horror **3.00** Dark Shadows **3.30** Dark Shadows **4.00** Close

HOME & LEISURE

6.00am Today's Gourmet **6.30** Graham Kerr **7.00** Room Service **7.30** The Painted House **8.00** Wedding Story **8.30** A Baby Story **9.00** Simply Painting **9.30** The Great Gardening Plot **10.00** Global Gardens **10.30** Two's Country Cooking **11.00** The Diceman **11.25** The Home and Leisure House **11.30** Rex Hunt Fishing Adventures **12.00** Our House Down Under **12.30pm** Antiques Trail **1.00** Our House **1.30** Hometime **2.00** New Yankee Workshop **2.30** Home Again with Bob Vila **3.00** This Old House with Steve and Norm **3.30** Charlie West Fishing

DISCOVERY

4.00pm Rex Hunt Fishing Adventures **4.30** A River Somewhere **5.00** Time Travellers **5.30** Terra X **6.00** Wildlife SOS **6.30** Untamed Africa **7.30** The Quest **8.00** Outback Adventures **8.30** Uncharted Africa **9.00** Test Pilots **10.00** The Great Egyptians **11.00** Weapons of War **12.00** Pinochet and Allende: Anatomy of a Coup **1.00am** Terra X **1.30** Time Travellers **2.00** Close

ANIMAL PLANET

12.00 The New Adventures of Black Beauty **12.30pm** Hollywood Safari **1.30** Deadly Australians **2.00** Wild Rescues **2.30** Human/Nature **3.30** Harry's Practice **4.00** Jack Hanna's Zoo Life **4.30** Animal Doctor **5.00** Pet Rescue **5.30** Deadly Australians **6.00** The New Adventures of Black Beauty **6.30** Lassie **7.00** Rediscovery of the World **8.00** Animal Doctor **8.30** Animal X **9.00** Ocean Wilds **9.30** Emergency Vets **10.00** Lions. Finding Freedom **11.00** Vet School **11.30** Emergency Vets **12.00** Close

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

7.00pm The War of Wings and Tongues **7.30** Fire Bombers **8.00** The Shark Files: The Smile of the Shark **9.00** The Waiting Game **10.00** Monkeys of Hanuman **11.00** Koalas in my Backyard **12.00** Kyonding's Elephant

HISTORY

4.00pm Clash of Wings: True Airpower **5.00** Forensic Science **6.00** Camelot **7.00** Salem Witch Trials

CARLTON FOOD

9.00am Food Network Daily **9.30** Coxon's Kitchen College **10.00** The Cookshop **10.30** First Taste **11.00** Worrall Thompson Cooks **11.30** A Slice of the Action **12.00** Food Network Daily **12.30pm** French Lunch **1.00** Coxon's Kitchen College **1.30** Gordon Ramsay's Passion for Flavour **2.00** Can't Stand the Heat **2.30** Food Network Daily **3.00** Food Factory **3.30** A Slice of the Action **4.00** New Chefs on the Block **4.30** Perfect Pasta with Aldo Zilli **5.00** Close

LIVING

6.00am Tiny and Crew **6.20** 10 Plus 2 **6.40** Greedysaurus and the Gang **6.45** Philbert the Frog **6.50** Polka Dot Shorts **7.00** Practical Parenting **7.05** Professor Bubble **7.30** Caillou **7.35** Bug Alert **7.55** Practical Parenting **8.00** Barney and Friends **8.25** Babaloos **8.30** Tiny Tales **8.35** Tiny and Crew **8.50** Practical Parenting **9.00** Special Babies **9.30** The Roseanne Show **10.00** The Jerry Springer Show **10.50** Maury Povich **11.40** The Heat Is On **12.10pm** Through the Keyhole **12.40** Rescue 911 **1.10** Beyond Belief: Fact or Fiction **1.40** Maury Povich **2.10** Special Babies **3.00** Living Room **3.50** Michael Cole **4.40** Through the Keyhole **5.10** The Heat Is On **5.40** Ready, Steady, Cook **6.15** The Jerry Springer Show **7.05** Rescue 911 **7.35** Animal Rescue **8.00** LA Law **9.00** FILM: A Kidnapping in the Family (1996) **11.00** The Sex Files II **12.00** Close

ZEE TV

5.00am Mrs Madhuri Dixit **5.30** Guldasta **6.00** Sony Men Lorry **6.30** Mast Must Show **7.00** Faith, Muslim **7.30** News **8.00** Music Mag **8.30** Tara 2 **9.00** Adhikar **10.00** Yeh Zindagi **11.00** Zaike Ka Safar **11.30** Parampara **12.00** FILM: Hindi Movie: Aakhri Daku **3.00pm** Bangla TV: Nokhetrer Rai **3.30** It's My Choice **4.00** Akbar Birbal **4.30** Zee Zone **5.30** Amanat **6.00** Artist of the Fortnight **6.30** Zee TV: Showcase **7.00** Chaeme Baddoor **7.30** Entertainment Express **8.00** News **8.30** Aashirwad **9.30** FILM: Hindi Movie: Ajay **12.00** News **12.30am** Ru-Ba-Ru **1.00** X-Zone **2.00** FILM: Hindi Movie: Aadmi





RUGBY LEAGUE 45
Stains plans to leave mark on Broncos

SPORT

ROBERT ELMS 50
In praise of the maligned Eighties



FRIDAY MARCH 12 1999

Premier League duo forced to resign

BY MATT DICKINSON

THE leaders of English football continued to fall like ninepins last night as Peter Leaver, the chief executive of the Premier League, and Sir John Quinton, its chairman, were forced to resign. Coming so soon after the recent scandal at the Football Association, the hierarchy of the national game now consists entirely of caretakers.

Echoes of the FA's cash-for-votes crisis resounded through the Premier League controversy as Leaver and Quinton, like former FA counterparts Graham Kelly and Keith Wiseman before them, were found guilty of exceeding their powers. As at Lancaster Gate less than three months ago, there were also undercurrents of political score-settling. Leaver had been increasingly unpopular among the FA Carling Premiership chairmen because of his austere style. It was entirely in character that, given the chance to plead for his position, he is believed to have stood his ground.

Leaver and Quinton were deemed to have abused their positions by giving lucrative contracts to Sam Chisholm and David Chance, both former BSkyB executives, without the full consultation of the chairmen of the 20 Premier League clubs.

Several reacted furiously when they heard the huge sums that Chisholm and Chance could make, including up to £13 million between them if they successfully renegotiated television rights when they expire in 2001.

A four-man sub-committee comprising David Dein, vice-chairman of Arsenal, Rick Parry, chief executive of Liverpool, Alan Sugar, chairman of Tottenham Hotspur, and Michael Jepson, a Coventry City director, was set up to try to renegotiate the contracts with Chisholm and Chance. But by yesterday they had succeeded only in a meeting last week with Chance, who is understood to have insisted that his contract was legally binding.

Leaver's failure to bring all the parties to the negotiating table had led to a hardening of opinions by yesterday morning and the outcome appeared inevitable long before the meeting came to a conclusion after 3½ hours. "Many of the chairmen seemed to have already made their minds up," a source said. "It was obvious from the start that the mood had turned against Leaver."

OUT OF A JOB



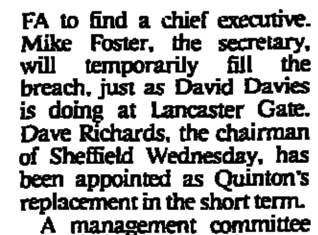


Leaver, left, and Quinton were said to have exceeded their powers

IN THE MONEY

Chisholm, left, and Chance negotiated highly lucrative contracts

The Premier League will now be in competition with the FA to find a chief executive. Mike Foster, the secretary, will temporarily fill the breach, just as David Davies is doing at Lancaster Gate. Dave Richards, the chairman of Sheffield Wednesday, has been appointed as Quinton's replacement in the short term.



A management committee to guide the Premier League through the crisis, comprising Dein, Parry, Doug Ellis, chairman of Aston Villa, Ken Bates, chairman of Chelsea, and Bryan Richardson, the Coventry chairman, was also approved. Parry will be put in charge of the ongoing legal case brought by the Office of Fair Trading, which is attempting to end the collective bargaining of clubs for television contracts. Leaver had already given his evidence and the League is confident that its case will not be damaged.

The most pressing job, though, will be the resolution of the Chisholm and Chance contracts, with the chairmen anxious that the negotiation of television rights should be brought back into their full remit and that the contracts offered by Leaver should be amended.

He promised Chisholm and Chance an initial fee of £600,000 with equal sums paid at the beginning of their second and third years, but it is the huge bonuses on offer that have provoked anger. A 5 per cent commission would be worth £13 million if, as the League hopes, the present BSkyB deal, worth £743 million over five years, is increased to more than £1 billion.

Chisholm and Chance were also promised 5 per cent of pay-per-view revenue as well as 10 per cent of the equity in a Premier League television company, which could provide its own match coverage.

Manchester United and Newcastle United were the first clubs to raise objections and by yesterday Leaver, a Tottenham fan and commercial barrister, and Quinton, the former chairman of Barclays Bank, had lost all support. Neither would speak last night as their lawyers negotiated settlements.

The English game now finds itself with an acting FA chairman (Geoff Thompson), FA chief executive (Davies) and coach (Kevin Keegan), and now Richards and Foster at the Premier League. In Scotland, Jim Farry, chief executive of the SFA, was ousted from his post this week after an inquiry into the handling of the registration of Jorge Cadete, the Celtic striker.

Stone joins Villa, page 46

Henman puts case to be best of British

FROM ALIX RAMSAY IN INDIAN WELLS, CALIFORNIA

THE Battle of Britain, as the locals termed it, is over and Tim Henman has emerged the winner. He advanced to the quarter-finals of the Champions' Cup with a 6-4, 2-6, 6-4 victory over Greg Rusedski.

As a match, it was like the curate's egg, good in parts. At times, both played well, very well in some cases, but seldom at the same moment. Such is the way of things between two men who know each other's games inside out.

For all their protestations of having a friendly and jolly rivalry, Rusedski and Henman have always got one eye on the opposition. Neither likes to be beaten at the best of times, but neither can stand to have the other get even the hint of an edge on him. For example, Henman signs a deal with Mercedes and drives a nifty little sports car around town; Rusedski joins up with Jaguar and swans around in a gleaming new motor. All in all, such rivalry does not make for the best of tennis matches. Yesterday, there was definitely a note of tension in the air — on court, at least.

As the match began, the crowd was thin on the ground, but in these parts, two Limeys playing tennis does not count for much. "Henman's the English one, I think," a bemused and elderly voice in the crowd said. He was also the one in charge as the hostilities got under way.

Rusedski was looking edgy and could not find his range on his first service, having to go through the first hour without an ace to his name. An exchange of breaks at the start did little to settle the nerves, but while Henman also took his time to get his service working, he was looking sharper on the volley.

Admittedly, his forehand was its usual, erratic self. When it is working, it is a match-winner; when it is stuttering, it is a liability and in the first set there was just enough of the former to make the difference. There were never going to be more than a few points in it either way and Henman seemed to be collecting the ones that counted.

However, the second set was a different story. Facing defeat, Rusedski began to relax and go for his shots and, as he did so, the wind picked up. Suddenly, the conditions were totally different and Henman could not cope.

Rusedski started to head for the net with more frequency and more purpose and, left to fend from the back court, Henman made a couple of duff judgments. As the set whistled by, Rusedski broke the Henman service three times, so was none too concerned that his own was snatched just the once.

Standing toe-to-toe in the third set, Rusedski came off worse, literally. Henman had got the hang of the gusting wind, breaking Rusedski to move into a 4-3 lead, when Ruseski had to call for the trainer. A huge blister on his big toe needed treatment — not that it seemed to slow him down much once the medics had done their stuff. But by then it was all too late and Henman was heading for the quarter-finals.



Henman cannot resist a glance towards Rusedski, his rival, during their tussle in Indian Wells yesterday. Photograph: Gary M. Prior/Allsport

Indeed, for him, the day was almost too good to be true. At first Henman and Rusedski's draw had looked to be a ticket to nowhere in particular. The figure of Pete Sampras loomed large in the quarter-finals — until, that was, he ran into Felix Mantilla. The Spaniard, who really ought not to be allowed near a barber's shop without a responsible adult to hold his hand — the hair colour was normal but the goatee beard was a little alarming — sat back and watched as Sampras stumbled and finally fell 7-6, 3-6, 6-3.

The world No1 looked decidedly ring-rusty after his long winter break and, with only five matches under his belt this year, he was struggling from the start — and he knew it.

"I couldn't get my game going and I struggled with everything," he said. "I don't like losing and playing the way I did tonight, but you can't just get your form back, like the way I was playing in Hanover last year. It's going to take some time, but I'm a pretty impatient guy and I like to win everything I play."

One thing he is still determined not to play is the United States' Davis Cup-tie in April. Whatever the rumours and whatever Rusedski has said, Birmingham does not fit into the great man's schedule.

"Maybe I'll get a message from God and He 'll say 'play Davis Cup', but I haven't spoken to Him lately," Sampras said, revealing a rare shaft of wit. However, with only two of the seven Americans left in the draw — Todd Martin and Chris Woodruff — and three possible team members gone — Jan-Michael Gambill, Jim Courier and Justin Gimelstob — Tom Gullikson, the United States captain, is having as hard a job getting a full team together as his opposite number, David Lloyd.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

No 1663

ACROSS
4 Horseshoe river bend (5)
7 Prearranged piece of trickery (3-2,3)
8 Thomas —, *Death in Venice* author (4)
9 Mechanical tower-bells (8)
10 London insurance market (6)
13 Opportune (6)
14 C15 Florence ruling family (6)
15 Friedrich —, Marx colleague (6)
18 Abandoned and decayed (8)
19 Protuberance (4)
20 Its course never did run smooth *(MND)* (4,4)
21 Opponent (5)

DOWN
1 Fall, lie, inelegantly (6)
2 Parsimonious (6)
3 Tiny spots; sounds like *glasses* (6)
4 Unconsciousness (8)
5 Accurate shot (5-3)
6 Soft neigh (6)
11 Stubbornly unshakable (8)
12 Meek obedience (8)
14 Confusion, mess (6)
15 Right of admission (in society) (6)
16 A historian; an ape (6)
17 Supple; part of gun carriage (6)

SOLUTION TO NO 1662
ACROSS: 1 Cube 3 Haricot 8 Crucial 9 Taxes 10 Lupin 11 Close in 13 Test match 17 Caribou 19 Route 20 Rabbi 22 Invited 23 Hexagon 24 Eden
DOWN: 1 Cackle 2 Blue Peter 3 Holy Communion 4 Ratio 5 Cox 6 Tisane 7 Fiends 12 Exhausted 14 Throve 15 Scorch 16 Redden 18 Being 21 Box

WBC attacks choice of referee

FROM SRIKUMAR SEN IN NEW YORK

THE World Boxing Council (WBC) is unhappy with the appointment, by the New York State Athletic Commission, of Arthur Mercante Jr as the referee in the bout between Lennox Lewis and Evander Holyfield for the world heavyweight championship here tomorrow.

The WBC had wanted Mercante's father, Arthur Mercante Sr, 78, who had refereed the first contest between Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier at the Garden and has been in charge of 103 championship bouts in six decades of officiating in the ring.

Mercante Jr was the referee for the contest between Lewis and Ray Mercer at the Garden in 1996, but Jose Sulaiman, the WBC president, said: "We are very disappointed. We had told the New York commission that we wanted Arthur Mercante Sr but they ignored our wishes and appointed his son.

"They did not even tell us who they had appointed. The son is not as experienced as his father, naturally, or as good. If it is age that is worrying the commission, I can only say that he had a very good fight only recently. This event at the Garden is a very important one and requires someone who has most experience of big fights."

The New York commission was not available for comment, but it is believed that Mercante Sr's age went against him. It is thought that the commission feared that if anything went wrong in the contest, they could be blamed for making the incorrect appointment of referee.

Lewis: controversy

Those who have seen Mercante Sr say that, even if he is two years off 80, he looks no more than a man in his late 60s. This is because of his position as deputy commissioner of the parks and recreation department at Hampstead, New York, where he is in charge of all fitness programmes.

Mercante Sr, who started out as the boxing co-ordinator of Gene Tunney in the US Navy in 1942, is still punching away, literally. He does several rounds on the heavy bag and speed-ball daily.

He said: "It was a great honour when they put up my name because I hope to be refereeing in the year 2000. But my son is just as good. They claim that he is the best young referee in the world.

"I was very critical of him when he told me he wanted me to become a referee. I told him he could not become a referee because he was an amateur referee first for three to five years. So he did the Golden Gloves and the Empire State Games and, after three years, he was ready.

Mercante Jr has not refereed any contests involving Holyfield, but, because of the complaints by Mike Tyson about use of the head by Holyfield, the referee will be watching out for infringements by the International Boxing Federation and World Boxing Association champion.

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According to his father, Mercante Jr, who is 5ft 11in and heavily built, will tolerate no nonsense. "My one advice to him was to be in complete control at all times. And not to be aware of the camera or smile or wave at it, as some refs do," Mercante Sr said.